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INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE
A SHORT HISTORY

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INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

A SHORT HISTORY

BY

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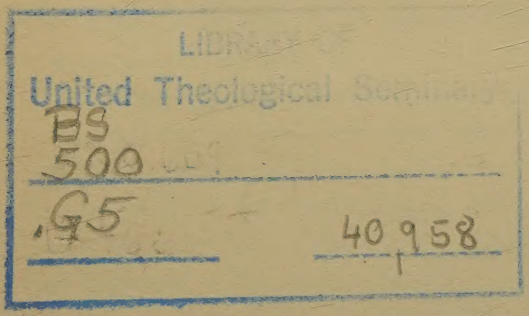

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PREFACE

THIS book surveys a great but neglected field. The greatness of the field is not easily overestimated, whether we regard its extent and complexity, or its importance. It stretches back through twenty centuries; it touches both the intellectual and the religious life of Jew and Christian on many sides; and it brings us into immediate contact with those processes which underlie all historic creeds and all our religious institutions. Coleridge has somewhere remarked that the history of a word is often more interesting and significant than the history of a campaign. That is most true, also, of the history of the *interpretation* of a word, and especially a word of the Scriptures. Out of their sound interpretation have come beneficial enfranchising influences, which have been promotive of the best civilization, while out of their misinterpretation has flowed the inspiration for the cruelest wrongs in Christian history.

But this wide field of the history of interpretation has been neglected. The English language has but one original work on the subject, and even that, with all its excellences, practically omits one of the most fundamental sections in the history of interpretation, viz., the interpretation of the Old Testament in the New.[1] The

[1] F. W. Farrar, *History of Interpretation*, 1886.

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poverty of other languages in the literature of our subject is quite as great as that of our own. The French writer Simon in his *Histoire Critique* (1693) treats the history of interpretation incidentally, the German work of Meyer [1] more comprehensively indeed, yet by no means as one would treat it to-day, and both these works have long since been forgotten except by the special student.

Whatever reason there may have been in the past for the neglect of this field, — lack of materials, lack of the historical spirit, lack of religious freedom, or other causes, — there appears to be no excuse for it at the present time; and, moreover, the unparalleled progress of the last half century in biblical research lends new emphasis to the need of fresh investigations in this neglected field.

What the history of interpretation is capable of contributing to a more intelligent use of the Bible will, it is hoped, be *suggested* at least by the present volume, though it is not here adequately shown. The praise of such a finished achievement must be reserved for some yet unwritten work.

[1] *Geschichte der Schrifterklärung*, 1802–1809. — A number of works on Hermeneutics, particularly German, devote some space to the history of interpretation.

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A SHORT HISTORY OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

CHAPTER I

CLASSICAL JEWISH INTERPRETATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

As the Old Testament holds a unique place in the creative literature of the world's religions, so the interpretation of the Old Testament by that people to whom it was originally given holds a unique position in the vast literature devoted to the interpretation of the Christian Scriptures. It is the only portion of that literature which was orally transmitted for generations; it is also the only portion of that literature which has determined the very existence of an entire people, and completely dominated their intellectual development; finally, it is the portion of that literature which surpasses all others in its almost incredible industry and ingenuity.

This Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament must form the first chapter of our survey of the interpretation of the Bible; for though its chief literary products are much later than the New Testament and Philo, and even than the early Fathers of the Church, its essential spirit and

method, and probably also no inconsiderable part of its material, antedated the Christian era. It is not needful for our purpose to attempt even a cursory survey of the entire course of Jewish interpretation. It was only the earlier period, the classic age of this interpretation, that exercised a wide and abiding influence upon the Christian Church. This classic age, when we have regard to its literary deposit, terminated with the fifth century. Illustrious Jewish scholars arose from time to time in subsequent centuries, such as Saadia († about 942), Maimonides († about 1204), and Kimchi († 1240), and these, indeed, were not without great influence on Christian exegesis, but they are not to be reckoned with the founders of the Mishna and Talmud.

The period in which the classic Jewish literature of the Old Testament was produced began with Ezra in the fifth century B.C. and ended with the Talmud about 500 A.D. The political history of the Jewish people during these more than nine centuries is summed up in four periods of dependence — the Persian, the Egyptian, the Greek, and the Roman — and a brief period of independence under the Hasmonean dynasty.[1] The religious life and development of the people during the first four centuries of this period is lighted up only at a few points and then in a partial manner. We are aware, indeed, that a powerful religious current flowed down through Jewish history from

[1] That part of the Persian period which was subsequent to Ezra was about a century and a quarter, 458–332 B.C.; the Egyptian period of about the same length, 320–198 B.C.; the Greek 198–142 B.C.; the Hasmonean 142–63 B.C.; and the Roman 63 B.C.–455 A.D.

the time of Ezra to the beginning of the Christian era, but it cannot be traced in detail from generation to generation. It is for the most part as a stream that flows underground. We know, indeed, something of its origin and its initial character, we see its tremendous force in the heroic history of the Maccabees, and we have yet fuller knowledge of it when it reaches the days of Hillel and Schammai.

The religious current of which we speak, which manifested itself in the creation of the synagogue, the institution of scribism, and the elaboration of a great legal system on the basis of the Pentateuch, plainly had its origin with Ezra, a great-grandson, apparently, of Hilkiah (Ezra 7: 1–5; 2 Kings 22 : 4), whose finding of the "book of the law" in 621 B.C. made the reign of King Josiah forever memorable. This Ezra, a Babylonian Jew who had "set his heart to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7 : 10), returning to Judea in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7: 7), was with Nehemiah the author of a profound moral reformation, and succeeded in making the little remnant of the captivity a compact people of the law. His pulpit of wood that stood in the broad place before the water gate, from which, during all the days of the feast of Tabernacles from early dawn until midday, he read to men and women the law of Moses (Neh. 8 : 3, 18), was, in its significance for the future of the Jewish people, second only to Mt. Sinai itself from which the great lawgiver had descended with his ten fundamental "words." All who had "knowledge and understanding" (Neh. 10 : 28), the priests and nobles and leaders of the people, "entered into a curse and into an oath to walk in God's law which

was given by Moses, the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord and his judgments and his statutes" (Neh. 10:29). Here then was a solemn "league and covenant" of the Jewish remnant to order their lives strictly according to an external law. This covenant was made about the year 444 B.C.[1] Simultaneously with this adoption of the law arose the necessity of having teachers and interpreters who should instruct the people in the law and determine its application to the new and varied needs of the present hour. Ezra brought some teachers with him from Babylon (Ezra 8:16). At the time of the historic reading of the law, to which we have referred, he had thirteen helpers who are mentioned by name (Neh. 8:7), besides certain Levites who were able to make the people understand the teaching of the law. He also had authority from Artaxerxes to appoint as magistrates and judges those who knew the laws of God (Ezra 7:25), which ordinance manifestly made his attitude toward the law and his type of interpretation dominant for his time.

It is natural, almost necessary, to suppose that Ezra and the men associated with him left some sort of organized court to continue their authority, but we have no certain knowledge of such an institution. The "Great Synagogue" is a shadowy institution, supposed to have existed from the time of Ezra to that of Simon the Just (221 B.C.). According to the *Pirqe Aboth* and the *Aboth* of Rabbi Nathan[2] it was an important link in the chain of authori-

[1] See Wellhausen, *History of Israel*, p. 407.

[2] See Taylor, *Pirqe Aboth*, pp. 110–111; *Aboth* of R. Nathan, i; Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, pp. 3, 6, 7.

ties by which the traditional law was handed down from Moses. To this body were ascribed the significant sentences, "Be circumspect in judgment; raise up many scholars; make a hedge about the law." The first of these sentences may have had a special reference to the preservation of colonial freedom under the Persian yoke, which might be forfeited through the acts of incompetent judges. The third sentence is our earliest illustration of a tendency which came to be of very great significance; that is, the tendency to guard against the transgression of the law by the enactment and enforcement of a multitude of protective ordinances. The conception of the law which is involved in this injunction is like that which is attributed to Simon the Just,[1] who said that the world rests on three things — the Torah, the temple service, and good works.[2] This teaching makes an acquaintance with the law and observance of its statutes the matter of supreme importance, and such, no doubt, it was already in the time of Ezra. The central element in his observance of Tabernacles was the reading of the law, as has been noted above; and on the day when the wall of Jerusalem was dedicated, the book of Moses was read in the audience of the people (Neh. 13:1). This was a sign of a new era in the history of Israel, an era in which the scribe, the professional interpreter of the sacred law, was to occupy a position of

[1] High priest 221–202 B.C. according to Jost, *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, p. 36, or identical with Simon I, who was high priest at the beginning of the third century B.C., according to Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, 2. 1. 355.

[2] See *Pirqe Aboth*, 2.

great authority, and in which the voice of a prophet was not to be heard.

From the institution of a legal form of religion under Ezra and Nehemiah, we must pass on to the uprising under the Maccabees two hundred and sixty-six years later before we have another opportunity to study the inner life of the Jewish people and to take the measure of the new forces that had been set in operation by the cup-bearer of Artaxerxes and the scribe of the house of Aaron.[1]

The struggle of the Maccabees was distinctly religious. It was a war waged for the law and the sanctuary (1 Macc. 6 : 59). The men who led in it did not seek for political independence, but only for freedom to observe their own religious laws in their own way. At the outbreak of this desperate conflict a thousand men and women of the Jews suffered death rather than defend themselves on the Sabbath (1 Macc. 2 : 67). And yet many of the people soon fell away to the enemy, caring more for life and comfort than for their ancestral worship (1 Macc. 2 : 44). Furthermore, there had long been Jews, especially of the aristocratic priestly families, who had been favorable to Greek civilization.[2] During the struggle of the Maccabean period these men became more pronounced in their liberal tendencies, and consequently at the same time more opposed to the stricter Jews (the *chasidim*). Under the name of Sadducees they played an important rôle until the

[1] A suggestive glimpse of earlier date is afforded by 1 Chron. 2 : 55, from which it appears that there were families or "guilds" (Weber) of scribes as early as the date of this book; that is, shortly after 333 B.C. (Driver).

[2] See Schürer, *Jewish People*, I. 1. 194–199.

destruction of Jerusalem, which was also their own destruction as a party. But the men who fought the battles and won the victories over the Syrian generals put the strict observance of the law above all other things. They were the true descendants of those people who in the days of Ezra had entered into a solemn covenant to keep all the statutes of the Lord. Their ultimate triumph and the establishment of the Hasmonean dynasty (completed in 142 B.C.) are evidence that the cultivation of the law, however erroneous its interpretation may have been, was at least not devoid of power over the wills and hearts of men.

In our introductory survey we may pass on at once from the Maccabean uprising to Hillel, who, according to the Talmud,[1] flourished a hundred years before the destruction of the temple.[2] In him and in his scarcely less famous contemporary Schammai, whose work may be dated in round numbers four hundred years after Ezra, we have teachers — perhaps the first — who are to be reckoned among the makers of the classic Jewish literature of interpretation. It is true, their immediate instructors, Schemaja and Abtalion, are called in the Talmud great interpreters,[3] and a line of eminent predecessors can be followed

[1] See Schürer, *Jewish People*, 2. 1. 357.

[2] "Hillel had 80 disciples, of whom 30 were worthy, as Moses, that the Shekinah should rest upon them; 30, that the sun should stand still for them, as for Joshua; and 20 were of medium capacity. The least was Jonathan ben Zakkai; the greatest Jonathan ben Uzziel, whose fire in the study of the Torah burnt up the birds that flew over him." See Taylor, *Pirqe Aboth*, pp. 20–21.

[3] See Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, 1. 4. This work and *Die Agada der Amoraim* are frequently cited in this chapter as source-books for the teaching of the rabbis.

back to the middle of the second century before Christ,[1] yet their combined contributions to the Talmud, at least under their own *names*, is very slight.[2] It is plain that the times preceding Hillel had not been lacking in authoritative Scripture interpreters, for he is credited with having made a collection of *halachoth*[3] (ordinances to be observed), and some of these, as, for example, those concerning the Sabbath, had probably been in force many generations.

The two centuries following the era of Hillel, or, more exactly, the four generations between the destruction of Jerusalem and the death of Juda the Patriarch, a descendant of Hillel (192 A.D.),[4] witnessed the production of a number of very important works, chief of which were the Aramaic translations or paraphrases (targums) of Onkelos and Jonathan, the *Mishna*, *Mechilta*, *Siphra*, and *Siphre*.[5] The Targums reflect the religious views of the times in which they originated, and are valuable for the light which they throw on the theology of the Jews and on their

[1] See Schürer, *Jewish People*, 2. 1. 357.

[2] Bacher, *op. cit.*, 1. 15–16, points out that it was only after the destruction of Jerusalem that special effort seems to have been made to preserve with the traditional teaching the names of its authors.

[3] See Zunz, *op. cit.*, p. 45. Every interpretation which was not *halachah* was called *agada* or *haggada*. The Mishna is almost exclusively made up of *halachoth*, while the Gemara contains a large amount of *agadoth*. The *halacha* was likened to an iron fortification around Israel; the *agada* to a labyrinth of flowery paths within this fortification. Karpeles, *Geschichte der jüdischen Literatur*, p. 152.

[4] Schürer, *Jewish People*, 1. 1. 129.

[5] Onkelos wrote about 50 A.D. (Zunz, *op. cit.*, p. 62), Jonathan a little later. Schürer, *Jewish People*, 1. 1. 157–158, following Geiger, puts these Targums in the third or fourth century, but thinks the *material* is largely as old as the time of the apostles. The Mishna was completed by Juda

method of interpretation. The Mishna is the codification of the oral law; *Mechilta*, *Siphra*, and *Siphre* are the earliest commentaries — *Mechilta* on a part of Exodus, *Siphra* on Leviticus, and *Siphre* on Numbers and Deuteronomy.

In the three centuries after the death of Juda the Patriarch, the Mishna expanded into the Talmud, or rather into two Talmuds — one, the Palestinian, compiled at Tiberias on the Lake of Galilee, and the other, the Babylonian, compiled at Sura.[1] The latter, called the "sea," is about four times as large as the former. The Talmud, though based on the Mishna and professing to be its completion (Gemara), is extremely miscellaneous and encyclopedic in character. It refers to about five hundred authorities, contains some ten thousand ordinances, and forms a codex by the side of which all other codexes are Lilliputian.[2]

To the same period in which the Talmud was committed to writing belongs the *Tosefta*, a work that supplements the Mishna (put by Weber at the end of the fourth century), and the *Bereshith Rabba*, a catena of rabbinic

the Patriarch, who died 192 A.D. *Mechilta*, *Siphra*, and *Siphre*, which, according to Zunz, reflect the older *Midrash*, are put by Weber (*Jüdische Theologie*, pp. xxv–xxvii) in the third century.

[1] Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, p. xxxii, puts the completion of the Jerusalem Talmud about 400 A.D., the Babylonian about 500 A.D. Schürer, *Jewish People*, I. I. 119–163, puts the Jerusalem Talmud in the period 200–400 A.D., and the Babylonian Talmud in the period 400–600 A.D. Schiller-Szinessy in *Ency. Brit.*, article "Talmud," holds that neither Talmud was written before the close of the sixth century.

[2] See Delitzsch, *Jüdisches Handwerkerleben*, p. 35.

opinions on the book of Genesis (sixth century, according to Zunz).

The writings which have now been enumerated may perhaps be allowed to include all the productions, or all that are of primary importance, constituting what I have called the classical Jewish literature of interpretation.[1]

From this preliminary survey of the field we proceed now to consider certain facts of a comprehensive character that condition all Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament. And we note, in the first place, that there was an oral law of immemorial standing and of great authority before the period of the earliest known teachers. It is impossible to fix the origin or determine the exact extent of this law. That it goes back through the time of the *Sopherim*[2] as far as Ezra is altogether probable. The state of dependence upon heathen rulers, and the influence of the Exile, to mention no other facts, made the rise of an oral law natural. Early Jewish opinion attributed this law to Moses. We read in *Pirqe Aboth* that Moses received the oral law from Sinai, that he delivered it to Joshua, Joshua to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and these to the men of the Great Synagogue.[3] Now this attempt to derive the oral law from Moses is clear evidence

[1] There are other writings which may well contain very ancient material, as the *Pesikta* of Rab Kahana, which Theodor (*Jewish Encyclopædia*, article "Midrash") classes with *Bereshith Rabba*, and the *Tanchuma*, the oldest connected Midrash on the Pentateuch.

[2] A designation of the teachers from Ezra to Simon the Just. The period of the Tannaites extends from Hillel to about 200 A.D., and the subsequent period to about 500 A.D. is called the period of the Amoraim.

[3] See Babylonian Talmud, Fourth Order, Ninth Tractate. A Roman

that this law was felt to be more or less *unlike* the written law. Had it been self-evident that the oral law was involved in the written, and so essentially identical with it, this tradition that it was given to Moses on Sinai would have had no ground of existence. And it would also have been unnecessary for the rabbis to assert again and again, generation after generation, that the oral law was of the same value as the written, or even of greater value.[1] This assertion and the tradition both imply a wide and manifest dissimilarity between the two laws. It is well known that one of the distinguishing marks of the Sadducees was their rejection of the traditional law.

If now the unwritten law was supposed to have been derived from Moses, it was natural that it was *believed* to be in harmony with the Pentateuch. It became, therefore, one of the great tasks of the scribes to prove that the oral law was based on the Scripture.[2] Most of it was thought to be proved out of the law,[3] and that which could not be thus proved was nevertheless declared to stand on the authority of the teachers who had transmitted it from the first. Thus the interpretation of the Pentateuch was hampered by the existence of a sacred oral law, even as, in later times in the Christian Church, the interpretation of

officer is said to have asked Hillel how many laws the Jews had, and he replied, "two — an oral and a written" (see Bacher, *Agada der Tannaiten*, 1. 82).

[1] See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, p. 105; Karpeles, *Geschichte der jüdischen Literatur*, pp. 153–154.

[2] See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, p. 125.

[3] See Strack, *Einleitung in den Thalmud*, p. 98; Mielziner, *Introduction to the Talmud*, pp. 120–121.

Scripture has been constantly and seriously hampered by the acceptance of an authoritative tradition (Roman Catholic Church), or, none the less effectually, by the sway of a system of theology which has long enjoyed ecclesiastic approval (Protestant as well as Roman Catholic Church).

Again, Jewish interpretation, not only of the Law, but also of the Prophets, was conditioned by the belief that the law was the absolute and perfect revelation of God. The rabbis held that this belief was justified by the Pentateuch itself. Thus Moses was thought to have proclaimed it when he said of the commandment, "It is not in heaven," for he thereby taught that nothing pertaining to the law had been left in heaven; in other words, that it was in itself the perfect revelation of God's will.[1] As such it was one of the seven things which were created before the world.[2] Jonathan ben Zakkai declared that the very purpose for which man was created was that he might learn the law,[3] and the Babylonian Talmud hands down a saying of Simon ben Jokkai (second century) that God gave three good gifts to Israel — the law, the promised land, and the world to come.[4] It was because of this conception of the absoluteness of the law that Akiba (*cir.* 50–132 A.D.), the greatest of the Tannaite scholars, regarded all the details of it as of equal value.[5] This conception of the

[1] See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, p. 18.

[2] The other six were repentance, paradise, hell, the throne of glory, the temple, and the name of the Messiah. See Taylor, *Pirqe Aboth*, p. 104; Winter and Wünsche, *Die jüdische Literatur*, Tract *Pesachim*.

[3] See Bacher, *Agada der Tannaiten*, 1. 29.

[4] See Schwab, *Le Talmud*, p. 236.

[5] See Bacher, *op. cit.*, 1. 310.

Law caused the other divisions of the Old Testament — Hagiographa and Prophets — to be relatively overlooked. It was impossible to give them due regard when they were ranked as imperfect by the side of the Law.

With this belief in the absoluteness of the revelation of the law, there was coupled a belief in the uniquely supernatural character of its origin. Probably this belief concerned at first only the Decalogue,[1] but it was early transferred to the entire Pentateuch. We read in the Talmud that all the ten words were spoken superhumanly with a single utterance, and even all the words in the Torah were spoken with a single word.[2] Moses wrote the entire Pentateuch, even the description of his own death, at the dictation of God, as Baruch wrote at the dictation of Jeremiah.[3] In comparison with the law thus superhumanly produced, the writings of prophets and psalmists were thought to have only a secondary degree of inspiration.[4] The proper medicine for the soul, that alone which gives life to the world, is the Law. In the parable of Simon ben Jokkai it is the Torah, not the Scriptures as a whole, which is the daughter of God, whose dwelling is God's dwelling, and an insult to whom is as an insult to God in His heavenly habitation.[5] The tenor of these statements regarding the unique relation of God to the law is frequently illustrated in classic Jewish literature. That such a

[1] See Schürer, *Jewish People*, 2. 1. 307.
[2] See Taylor, *Pirqe Aboth*, p. 109.
[3] See Bacher, *Agada der Tannaiten*, 2. 49.
[4] See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, p. 82; Schürer, *op. cit.*, 2. 1. 311.
[5] See Bacher, *Agada der Tannaiten*, 2. 135; Taylor, *Pirqe Aboth*, p. 76.

dogma as this must have deeply influenced all Jewish interpretation of the law is too obvious to need proof.

We come now to a somewhat closer and more detailed view of our subject. And in the first place we shall endeavor to point out and illustrate the elements of weakness in classical Jewish interpretation. The business of pointing out what appear to be the elements of weakness in any literature of interpretation is simply historical. We are not concerned to defend or to censure the rabbinic interpreters whom we are at present to consider, but only to present the characteristics of their work.

We find then, in the first place, that the classic Jewish interpreters of the Old Testament were ignorant of the origin and scope of the various sacred writings. They appear to have given but little thought to these matters, — a circumstance which throws on them an unfavorable light, — and what thought they did give to them led chiefly to erroneous results. The entire Pentateuch, as we have seen, was attributed to Moses, even the last chapter of Deuteronomy, which not only describes his death and burial, but also remarks that "no man knoweth of his sepulchre *unto this day*." The "book of the covenant" (Ex. 24 : 7) which Moses read to all Israel was, according to Jose ben Juda [1] (second century), the book of Genesis and the book of Exodus as far as this passage, while, according to Juda the Patriarch [2] (*cir.* 135–220 A.D.), it consisted of the commandments which God gave to

[1] See Bacher, *Agada der Tannaiten*, 2. 419.
[2] See Bacher, *op. cit.*, 2. 477.

Adam, to Noah and his descendants, to Israel in Egypt, and various other precepts.

The book of Esther was thought to have been composed by Mordecai and indeed composed in the Holy Spirit, for it is said in chapter 2 : 22 that the plot of Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, to lay hands on Ahasuerus, became known to Mordecai; and obviously, if it became known to him, it *must* have been through the Spirit, and *therefore* the entire book must have been written in the Spirit and must be inspired.[1]

Again, Eleazar of Modaim (first and second centuries) ascribed the Hallel Psalms to Deborah and Barak, Joshua ben Hananiah (*cir.* 70–120 A.D.) dated them from the time when Joshua faced the kings of Canaan, and Eliezer ben Hyrcanos (first and second centuries) put them back even farther, to the day when Israel crossed the Red Sea.[2] Rabbi Meir (second century), the distinguished pupil of Akiba, ascribed all the Psalms to David, and did this on the ground of a conjectural reading of a single word in an early footnote to Ps. 72.[3] Some later teachers of distinction ascribed some of the Psalms to Abraham and some even to Adam![4]

Of these citations which have been made, some illustrate both the ignorance of Jewish teachers in regard to the origin of various sacred writings and also their failure

[1] See Bacher, *op. cit.*, 2. 49.
[2] See Bacher, *op. cit.*, 1. 155, 201.
[3] See Bacher, *op. cit.*, 2. 49.
[4] See Bacher, *Die Agada der Amoraim*, 1. 260.

to appreciate the scope of these writings. The scope of Genesis, for example, can hardly have been understood when it was regarded as part of the "book of the covenant" which Moses read to Israel at Sinai. As little was the scope of Job known to men who, like Juda the Patriarch, said that if the book contained nothing else than *an account of the sin of the generation who were overtaken by the Flood, and their punishment* (!) it would have fulfilled its purpose.[1] One is constantly reminded when reading the Talmud, or such special writings as *Mechilta*, *Siphra*, and *Siphre*, that their authors had not studied the separate books of the Pentateuch each as a whole, and so did not interpret the details in the light of the entire work. And one may go further and take an illustration of the point under discussion from the fact that the scope of the Prophets as a division of the Old Testament, or the scope of the Hagiographa, was not understood. These writings were regarded merely as an interpretation of the Law, not as an independent revelation which is often fundamentally opposed to the Law.[2]

One may say that the classical Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament failed to measure the significance of the Prophets as completely as Philo did. We cannot say that they truly apprehended the scope of the Law, but it is clear that their failure to understand the Prophets was still more complete.

Another widespreading and fruitful source of weakness in Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament was

[1] See Bacher, *Agada der Tannaiten*, 2. 473.
[2] See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, p. 81.

its extreme license in dealing with the text. This license, as regards the text of the Law, was indeed inconsistent with the dogma that the Law had come down from heaven, and that Moses had not spoken so much as a single verse of his own knowledge; nevertheless it was practised. There was already in the Targums a notable freedom in dealing with the Old Testament text. Thus, for example, Onkelos, in translating the Blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49), departs in numerous instances from the literal meaning of the Hebrew. The "hands of the Mighty One of Jacob" disappear entirely in this rendering (vs. 24); instead of "Shiloh" we have "Messiah" (vs. 10); the "ruler" or "lawgiver" becomes a "scholar" or scribe (vs. 10), and the next verse speaks of those who occupy themselves with the "teaching," that is, the Law, though the Hebrew text has no suggestion of this; and finally, in the verses concerning the tribe of Dan (16–17) Onkelos twice introduces the "Philistines," though the original has no allusion to them.

In Jonathan's Targum of the Prophets we have as great or even greater license in dealing with the text. Thus for the second verse of Isaiah: "Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O earth," we have in Jonathan: —

"Hear, O ye heavens, that quaked when I gave my teaching to my people, and listen, O earth, that trembled at my words." The fifteenth verse of this chapter of Isaiah, — "When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you" is changed into this: "When the priests spread out their hands to pray for you, I will take away from you the face of my Shekinah." This intro-

duction of the "priests" as making supplication for Israel, and the substitution of the "face of the Shekinah" for that of God, is representative of a large class of changes in Jonathan, and sufficiently illustrates his freedom in handling the text.

Another form of license in the treatment of the text by Jewish interpreters was the habit of regarding the letters of a word as initials of a like number [1] of words to be discovered.[2] Bacher gives a list of thirty-eight instances of this species of so-called interpretation from the teachers of the Tannaite period.[3] The most distinguished rabbis, like Akiba, Eleazar of Modaim, Joshua ben Hananiah, and Eliezer ben Hyrcanos, did not hesitate to make use of this method. As we should expect, there were the widest differences in the results which different men obtained from the same word. For, obviously, the procedure was pure guesswork. It seems to have been resorted to, as a rule, only in the case of difficult words, but the only light it ever shed was on the exegetical incapacity of the interpreters. It would be quite superfluous to discuss this method at length, and it may be dismissed with one or two illustrations. Ismael ben Elisha (first and second centuries), one of the first generation of teachers after the destruction of Jerusalem, re-

[1] Not *always* a like number. See illustration from Akiba in Bacher, *Agada der Tannaiten*, 1. 312, where a word of five letters is resolved into three words.

[2] This method was called *notarikon* (נטריקון), which Jost connects with the Latin *notarius*, a rapid writer. See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, p. 123.

[3] See Bacher, *op. cit.*, 2. 378.

solved the Hebrew word *ethhen* in Lev. 20 : 14 (ואתהן) into two parts, the second of which was the *Greek* word for *one* (ἕν).[1] This guess was apparently determined by a similarity of sound between the Hebrew suffix and the Greek numeral. Another illustration is from Ps. 77 : 21 : —

> "Thou leddest thy people like a flock
> By the hand of Moses and Aaron."

The word *nachithah* (נחית), having four letters, was taken to mean *wonder*, *life*, *sea*, and *law;* and Weber gives the rabbinic thought as follows: "Thou hast worked a *wonder* for thy people; thou hast given them *life;* thou hast divided the *sea;* thou hast given them the *law*." [2]

This form of license in handling the text of Scripture was equalled by another called *gematria* (γεωμετρία). This was in use as early as the close of the first century (see Rev. 13 : 17, 18). It consisted in manipulating the numerical values of the letters of any word, quite independently of its proper meaning. Thus by adding the values of the several letters of a word, striking prophecies were sometimes discovered, as when, on the basis of the word *radav* (ורד) in Gen. 42 : 2, it was calculated that the Egyptian bondage was to last 210 years; [3] or as when Nachman ben Isaac (fourth century) deduced from

[1] See Bacher, *Agada der Tannaiten*, 1. 255.

[2] See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, p. 124. For other striking examples of *notarikon*, see Bacher, *op. cit.*, 1. 312; 2. 257.

[3] See Taylor, *Pirqe Aboth*, p. 62. ר = 200, ד = 4, ו = 6.

the word *deliverances* (תוצאות) in Ps. 78 : 20 the result that there are 903 different kinds of death for man.[1] From the name *Satan* (השטן), which has the numerical value 364, it was inferred that Satan had power over Israel all the days of the year but one, that is, the great day of atonement;[2] and in the oldest collection of opinions on Genesis, the ladder which Jacob saw is identified with Mt. Sinai because the two words have the same numerical value.[3]

But *notarikon* and *gematria* were not the only ingenious devices with which the rabbis, even in the classical age of Jewish interpretation, sought to discover hidden meanings in the sacred text. The thirty-two rules which Eliezer laid down for the interpretation of Scripture, which Schwab reduces to thirteen, are all merely different ways of extracting from a given word or passage some remote sense,[4] but our point is sufficiently illustrated without going further in this direction.[5] What we have said shows that there was an amazing license in the treat-

[1] See *Berachoth*, 1. 8[a].

[2] See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, p. 121.

[3] See Taylor, *Pirqe Aboth*, p. 62.

[4] See Schiller-Szinessy in *Ency. Brit.*, article "Talmud"; Schwab, *Le Talmud*, Introd., p. liii; Mielziner, *Introduction to the Talmud*, p. 123.

[5] A common means of reaching an uncommon interpretation of a word was the change of its vowels. For a list of such instances, see Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, 2. 577. A notable instance is seen in *Pirqe Aboth*, 6. 2. In Ex. 32 : 16, where we read that the writing was the word of God "graven (*charuth*) upon the tables," we are told to read *cheruth* which means *freedom*, "for," the interpreter adds, "thou wilt find no freeman but him who is occupied in learning of Torah." See Taylor, *Pirqe Aboth*, p. 100.

ment of the text even by the early Jewish interpreters.[1]

A third element of weakness in the classical Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament was the very common failure to distinguish between the essential and the incidental. This is doubtless to be seen in all periods of Christian interpretation, even in that of the present day, but probably no considerable body of the literature of interpretation is so strikingly pervaded by this element as is that which we are now considering. It matters little to what part of the Talmud we turn, or which of the commentaries or *midrashim* one consults: on every page one finds abundant evidence of this failure of the ancient interpreters to distinguish between that which is central and essential in a passage or book of Scripture, and those things which are of quite subordinate value, indeed, in multitudes of cases, of no independent value whatever.

In illustrating this point we turn first to *Mechilta*, the commentary on Exodus. From the words of Ex. 19 : 2, "They pitched in the wilderness," that is, the wilderness where the Law was given, it was concluded that the Law was divinely purposed *for all nations*. This is argued, not from the scope and character of the Law itself, but from the wholly irrelevant detail that it was given to Israel in an *uninhabited* region. In *Siphra*, the commentary on Leviticus, the statement that one should rise up before the hoary head is interpreted to mean that one should rise up before the *wise man* only; and thus the essential truth

[1] This element became still more pronounced in later Jewish writings, as in the Kabbala. See Zunz, *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, p. 157.

of the text — reverence for age — is exchanged for something quite different. In Gen. 47 : 29 Jacob's request is recorded, that he should not be buried in Egypt. "Why not?" it is asked in *Bereshith Rabba*. Because, says the unnamed author, the land was to be smitten with vermin, and his body might feel them. Another rabbi was of the opinion that Jacob did not wish to be buried in Egypt lest the Egyptians should make an idol of him.

We read in 2 Kings 2 : 11 that the Prophets Elijah and Elisha "talked as they went," and the Talmud asks the weighty question what they were talking about. One rabbi said that they talked of the *Shema* (Deut. 5 : 4–5), another that they talked of the creation of the world.[1] The schools of Hillel and Schammai discussed the question whether the heaven was created before the earth or the earth before the heaven.[2] Later a rabbi rose up and proved that both were created at the same time.[3] The commentary on Exodus, explaining the gracious word of the Lord, "I am thy physician," says that it is the words of the Torah which are life.[4] Thus the great truth of the text — the personal relationship of God to the soul — is lost sight of, and a cold servitude to the letter is all that is left.

As illustrations of the manner in which the Psalms are employed in the Talmud, we may take the following cases: The word of Ps. 1 : 2, "And in his law doth he meditate day and night," is cited in proof that the ritual shall be

[1] See *Berachoth*, 5.
[2] See Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, 1. 17.
[3] See Bacher, *op. cit.*, 1. 18.
[4] See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, p. 20.

equally divided between daylight and dark.[1] The fulfilment of Ps. 4 : 5, "Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still," was seen in Samuel ben Nachman (third century), who repeated the *Shema* until he fell asleep.[2] "The wicked walk on every side" (or, round about) (Ps. 12 : 8) is cited to show that a man who prays behind a synagogue is worthy of being called impious.[3] From the words "The law of the Lord is perfect" (Ps. 19 : 8) the Talmud argues that it must be presented in a perfect manner; that is, always with the same number of benedictions preceding and following the reading of it.[4]

This habit of the Jewish interpreter to fasten on some unimportant detail of the text in question is that which, in no small measure, makes the Talmud a book of learned trifles, a book in which the mountain labors and brings forth only a mouse, a book in which, as has been said, you shall search two bushels of chaff to find two grains of wheat.

A fourth element of weakness in classic Jewish interpretation was the assumption of a hidden meaning in the words of Scripture. This was by no means universal.[5]

[1] See *Berachoth*, 1. 8.
[2] See *Berachoth*, 1. 10.
[3] See *Berachoth*, 5. 1.
[4] See *Berachoth*, 5. 4.
[5] It cannot be said, in general terms, that the Jews saw a fourfold meaning in Scripture corresponding to the terms *peshat*, *remez*, *derush*, and *sôd* (see Farrar, *History of Interpretation*, p. 95; Schürer, *Jewish People*, 2. 1. 348, who ascribes this to "later Judaism"); nor can we say that they found in *all* Scripture a twofold sense, though the Talmud speaks of at least two methods of interpretation, and though a mystic interpretation of Gen. 1 and Ezek. 1 goes back to early times. See Mielziner, *Introduction to the Talmud*, pp. 117–118; Briggs, *Biblical Study*, pp. 300–301.

The Talmud, for example, illustrates both the tendency to go behind the natural sense and the tendency to literalism. Joshua ben Hananiah, to take a single case, preferred a highly artificial interpretation, but his contemporary, Eleazar of Modaim, held, as a rule, to the obvious meaning of the text.[1] But the leaven of the notion that there is a hidden meaning in Scripture was strong, and most of the illustrious rabbis were more or less influenced by it. Jonathan ben Zakkai, in whose exegesis Bacher says the best traits of the *Agada* are to be found, was one of the founders of the secret teaching, which was based on the first chapter of Genesis and the first of Ezekiel.[2] Akiba, who died as a martyr in the revolution under Bar-Kochab, regarded the Song of Solomon — which he interpreted allegorically — as the most holy of the Hagiographa, and a tradition of the second century represents him as the only one of his generation who entered the garden of secret teaching and came forth unharmed.[3] Simon ben Jokkai (second century), though, like Ismael, he held that the Scripture speaks the language of men, departed not infrequently from the natural sense, as when he taught that the bush in which Moses saw the flame of fire was a symbol of Egypt, or when, from the words of Deut. 33 : 2 : "At his right hand was a fiery law for them," he taught that the law went forth from the right hand of God, made a circuit around Israel, and returned to the left hand of God, who then graved it on tables of stone.[4]

[1] See Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, I. 204.
[2] See Bacher, *op. cit.*, I. 30, 43.
[3] See Bacher, *op. cit.*, I. 318, 340.
[4] See Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, I. 117, 118.

The arbitrary manipulation of the separate letters of a word, which has already been discussed, implied, of course, the belief in a hidden sense. This was implied, also, when the interpreters resorted to allegory, a point to which we may now make brief reference. Jewish interpreters made much less use of allegorical interpretation than did some of their contemporaries in the Christian Church. It was resorted to in exceptional cases where the Scripture itself leads the way, or where the text appeared to be especially difficult. Thus the vine with three branches in Gen. 40, which Joseph interpreted symbolically, was variously explained by different rabbis. Eliezer ben Hyrcanos said that the vine was humanity, and the three branches were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Joshua ben Hananiah held that the vine was the Law, and the three branches Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. It does not appear that these scholars denied the correctness of Joseph's interpretation, but they evidently thought that the symbols which the butler saw had *other* meanings.[1] It seems likely that the allegorical method was most frequently applied to difficult texts. Such is the Song of Solomon, which Akiba and Resch Lakisch (*cir.* 200–275) treated as an allegory. Rabbi Ismael, who held firmly to the natural sense of the sacred text, admitted that there were three passages which could be understood only in an allegorical manner (viz. Ex. 21 : 19; 22 : 3; Deut. 22 : 17). In these cases the natural sense was set aside altogether. In like manner the seeming difficulty of Ex. 17 : 11 probably led Eliezer ben Hyrcanos to adopt

[1] See Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, 1. 149.

an allegorical explanation. He said that the holding up of Moses's hand signified the future observance of his teaching, and the sinking of his hand signified the neglect of the Law in Israel.[1] We need not dwell longer on this point. Though the tendency to go behind the natural sense of the text was strong among the early Jewish interpreters, resort to allegory was not characteristic of their method.

Finally, as an element of weakness in the Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament, we must count its highly conjectural and speculative character, an element which was largely responsible for the uncertainty of Jewish exegesis. A few illustrations will indicate the nature and limits of this feature of the subject. One of the 316 controversies between the school of Hillel and the school of Schammai was that concerning the order of the resurrection. The school of Schammai, arguing from Ezek. 37, held that the order would be the reverse of the order of nature, while the school of Hillel, arguing from Job 40 : 10, held that in the resurrection man would be developed from less to more as in his earthly origin.[2] But neither of these passages of Scripture can reasonably be said to refer to the order of the resurrection, and one does not even touch the general subject at all. Again, Ex. 24 : 9 tells how Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu with seventy elders went up to Moses on the mount. Only three names are given, the elders not being personally designated. This was to indicate, says the Talmud, that whenever there should be

[1] See Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, 1. 108.
[2] See Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, 1. 19.

in Israel a court of three men, it would have equal honor with the court of Moses himself — a very important conclusion, but resting on a wholly conjectural foundation.

In Prov. 6 : 2, which speaks of the commandment of the father and the law of the mother, it is said: —

> "When thou walkest, it shall lead thee;
> When thou sleepest, it shall watch over thee;
> And when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee."

Here is the interpretation of it by Josua ben Qisma: The first line refers to the present world, the second to the grave, and the third to the world which is to come.[1] It is obvious that the interpreter found a suggestion of death in the word "sleepest" and of the future world in the word "awakest." Another representative case is furnished by *Pirqe Aboth*, 3, 9. "When ten sit and are occupied with words of the Torah, the Shekinah is among them, for it is said, 'God standeth in the congregation of the mighty.'" The proof that ten are a "congregation" was found in the fact that this term was applied to the twelve spies when Caleb and Joshua were absent.[2] Thus the wholly irrelevant circumstance that the word "congregation" was once used of a company of ten men is the basis of the teaching that when ten men are engaged in studying the law, the Shekinah is with them.[3]

[1] See Taylor, *Pirqe Aboth*, p. 103.

[2] See Taylor, *Pirqe Aboth*, p. 46.

[3] Resch Lakisch said that *Shinar* (Gen. 11 : 2) was so called because the dead of the Deluge were there cast down (*scheninaron*) (*Berachoth*, 4 : 1). In the Babylonian Talmud (*Berachoth*, 9 : 9) the evil desire is said to re-

Finally, it is taught in the *Tosefta* (Tract *Joma*) that the sin of one who has profaned the name of God may be partly atoned for by repentance, by the Day of Atonement, and by the sufferings of life, but not wholly. Only three quarters of the sin can thus be covered. The remaining quarter is atoned for by the day of death, as is written in Jer. 22:14: "This iniquity shall not be purged from you until ye die." "This passage," it is said, "teaches that the day of death completes the atonement." But it hardly needs to be pointed out at present that the prophet is not speaking of the power of death to atone for sin, not to say its power to atone for just one quarter of a particular sin, but that he simply affirms in a rhetorical manner that a certain iniquity is unpardonable.

This element of Jewish exegesis may be yet a little further illustrated. Thus in the fact that there are six hundred and thirteen letters in the Decalogue was found a proof that the oral law should contain six hundred and thirteen commandments.[1] Ground for the prohibition of exactly thirty-nine kinds of labor was discovered in the fact that the construction of the Tabernacle called for thirty-nine sorts of labor, also in the fact that the word "work" occurs thirty-nine times in the Pentateuch.[2] Jonathan ben Eliezer (third century) said that there were eighteen benedictions in the liturgy because of the eighteen

semble a grain of wheat (חטה) because in Gen. 4:7, when it is said to couch at the door, the word חטאת is used, and the two words are closely similar.

[1] See Taylor, *Pirqe Aboth*, p. 108.

[2] See *Schabbath*.

times repeated saying in Exodus, "as the Eternal commanded," [1] while Rabbi Levi II (third century) taught that it was because the sacred name occurs eighteen times in Ps. 29.[2]

Such was the element in Jewish interpretation which we have called conjectural and speculative. If it ever led to the truth, it was by pure accident. It was as unscientific as the manipulation of the letters of a word by *notarikon* and *gematria*.

It remains now to speak of the elements of strength in Jewish interpretation, for such elements were manifestly present. There were, in the first place, some sound principles of exegesis. The seven [3] rules of Hillel, though not fundamental for the determination of the sense of the text, were good as far as they went. They enunciated great truths, and had they been consistently applied to the interpretation of the Old Testament, the result would have been much better than what the Talmud and other early writings offer us. Some of these principles, as that a word must be explained in the light of its context, are recognized and applied in all scientific interpretation. It was also a step in the right direction when the teacher of Akiba, Nachum of Gimzo (first century), drew attention to the significance of particles, as the article and

[1] See Bacher, *Die Agada der Amoraim*, 1. 64.

[2] See *Berachoth*, 4. 3.

[3] These were increased to 13, perhaps by Ismael. They are found in the prayer-book of the Jews, and were repeated in the daily prayer (see Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, p. 109). These rules of Hillel are discussed in detail by Mielziner, *Introduction to the Talmud*, p. 123 ff., and by Weber, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–118.

adverbs, even though he pressed the point to extremes.[1] Again it was a great utterance of Ismael that Scripture speaks the language of the children of men[2]; that is, that Scripture is to be read and interpreted as other books. Thus, he argued, when the Lord said to Joshua: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth and thou shalt search in it day and night," that is not to be taken literally, for then all other activities of life would be excluded. We cannot say that this principle of Ismael was very widely or intelligently held by the rabbis, but its recognition and even partial application by this teacher stamps him as one of the most illustrious interpreters of the early centuries.

But far more important than this acquaintance with certain sound principles of exegesis, considered as an element of strength in the Jewish literature of Old Testament interpretation, was the spiritual insight of some of the rabbis. It is this that constitutes the saving salt of the Talmud and other classic memorials of rabbinic activity. There were no scientific interpreters, as we use that term at present, but there were among the rabbis men who, in spite of their exegetical deficiencies, often saw into the heart of Scripture. It is only fair that we should illustrate this aspect of our subject as fully as we have the weakness of Jewish exegesis. This may be done both by reference to the interpretation of individual Scripture verses and by the maxims handed down from different teachers, for

[1] Thus he took את in Deut. 34:6 reflexively, and hence made Moses bury himself! See Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, I. 61–63, 248.

[2] See Bacher, *op. cit.*, I. 247.

these maxims, though not connected with particular texts, contain in most cases a wisdom derived from the Scripture. They are, as it were, the residuum from long and deep meditation on the Law and Prophets of Israel. It was Hillel who gave as a free rendering of Ps. 113:6–7 this sentiment which we find also in the teaching of Jesus: "My humiliation is my exaltation, and my exaltation my humiliation."[1] When a pupil of Jonathan ben Zakkai said to him, weeping, "Woe to us because of the destruction of the place of offering" (*i.e.* the temple), the master replied, "Weep not; we still have a means of reconciliation; that is, the practice of works of love, for it is written, I desire love and not sacrifice."[2] The story of King Munbaz contains not only good ethical teaching, but also apt use of Scripture.[3] This king divided all his goods among the poor. His relatives sent word to him, saying, "Thy ancestors added to that which their forefathers had saved up, but you give away both what you and your fathers possessed." He replied, "My fathers gathered treasures on earth, but I gather treasures in heaven, as is written in Ps. 85:12: 'Righteousness looks down from heaven.' They gathered treasures which yielded no fruit, but I gather such as bear fruit, as is said in Is. 3 : 10: 'Say of the righteous that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat of the fruit of their doings.' They heaped up treasures in a place where the

[1] See Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, I. 8.

[2] See Bacher, *op. cit.*, I. 39.

[3] See Tractate *Pea* in Winter and Wünsche, *Geschichte der jüdischen Literatur*, p. 188.

hand had power over them, but I lay them up in a place where the hand has no power over them, as is said in Ps. 97:2: 'Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the foundation of his throne.' They gathered gold and goods, but I gather souls, as is written in Prov. 11:30: 'He that is wise winneth souls.'"

The motto of Hillel, "Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving mankind and bringing them nigh to the Torah," is a worthy expression of deep principles of the Pentateuch;[1] and his rigid opponent Schammai, so strict in the observance of the Law that when his daughter bore a child on the day of the Feast of Tabernacles, he had the roof over the bed broken through and a booth of green branches erected that the child might keep the feast — even Schammai's motto contained much wisdom of head and heart: "Say little, do much, and receive every one in a friendly manner."[2] Eliezer ben Hyrcanos had this motto: "Let the honor of thy neighbor be as dear to thee as thine own; be not easily provoked; and repent the day before thy death." When his scholars asked him whether a man knew beforehand the day of his death, he replied: "All the more will he repent; for perhaps he will die on the next day; thus he repents all his days."[3] Of Meir[4] the following utterance has been preserved, which, as he attributed it to God,

[1] See Taylor, *Pirqe Aboth*, p. 21.

[2] See Karpeles, *Geschichte der jüdischen Literatur*, p. 165.

[3] See Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, 1. 101.

[4] Called in *Berachoth*, 2. 7, "grand homme, saint homme, homme modeste." See Schwab, *Le Talmud*, *op. cit.*

may be taken as his summing up of the teaching of Scripture: "Purpose with thy whole heart and soul to know my ways and zealously to wait at the doors of my teaching; lay up my teaching in thy heart, and let my fear be before thy eyes; keep thy mouth from every sin, purify and cleanse thyself from every sin and transgression; then will I be with thee at all times." [1] "On three things the world stands," said Simeon ben Gamaliel II (second century), "on judgment, on truth, and on peace," [2] and the son of Juda the Patriarch was in the habit of saying, "Do his will as if it were thy will, that he may do thy will as if it were his will. Annul thy will before his will, that he may annul the will of others before thy will." [3]

These bits of interpretation and these summaries of the wisdom of men who fed on the Scripture are sufficient to illustrate the claim that the most considerable element of strength in the classical Jewish literature of Old Testament interpretation is the deep spiritual insight of some of the rabbis. That literature, as a whole, is pervaded by a deadly literalism and an unbounded arbitrariness. It is literature of the Pentateuch rather than of the whole Old Testament, and its dominating conception even of the Law to which it is so largely devoted is at variance with fundamental moral and spiritual principles of the Law itself. It is an unparalleled monument to the religion of strict legality, and therefore as an interpretation of the Old Testament religion in its *entirety* it is a monument of

[1] See Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, 2. 12.
[2] See Taylor, *Pirqe Aboth*, p. 25.
[3] See Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

pathetic misinterpretation. And yet it enshrines the names of a considerable number of teachers who, in spite of the heavy servitude of a religion of the letter and against the weight of age-long false opinions regarding the Scripture, established a good claim to our grateful remembrance by their fragments of exegetical wisdom and still more by their gift of spiritual insight.

CHAPTER II

PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA AS INTERPRETER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE two most influential Jewish contemporaries of Jesus were Saul of Tarsus and Philo of Alexandria. Both were Jews of the Dispersion, both were men of great natural ability, both enjoyed the best educational advantages of their respective lands. The former became a Christian, and did more than any other of his generation, not only for the extension of the Church, but also for the determination of its theological views; the latter, so far as we know,[1] had no acquaintance with Christianity, and yet, through his writings and especially by his method of interpreting the Old Testament, he wielded a profound influence over the leaders of the Christian Church in the early centuries.

Both Paul and Philo were animated, though not with equal intensity, by a lofty missionary purpose. One devoted his life to the proclamation of the Gospel among all nations, the other labored to commend the Jewish religion to the Greek world. The master of Paul was Jesus, the master of Philo was Moses.

[1] The tradition recorded by Eusebius (*Church History*, 2. 17) that Philo became acquainted with Peter in Rome is wholly without support and is almost universally rejected.

Now just as Paul can be truly estimated only when he is studied in the light of this animating missionary purpose, so also is it in the case of Philo. To understand his method of interpretation and to appreciate its significance for the history of Christianity, it is needful, first of all, to consider his aim, what he was seeking to accomplish.

Philo was an heir of two distinct civilizations. He was a Jew, a member of one of the first families of Alexandria,[1] and loyal to the religion of his fathers. He saw in Moses the supreme interpretation of the will of God,[2] a man whose ideas regarding the creation of the world "surpass the power of speech and hearing, being too great and venerable to be adapted to the senses of any mortal."[3] The Jewish people he regarded as surpassing all others in love of God, and they seemed to him to have received the offices of priesthood and prophecy on behalf of all mankind.[4] Philo was proud, therefore, of his Jewish heritage.

But he was also an appreciative heir of the best in Greek civilization. Greek was his mother tongue, and, next to

[1] According to Josephus (*Antiq.* 18. 8. 1; 19. 5. 1; 20. 5. 2) Philo was a brother of Alexander the alabarch, who was a man of great wealth, a friend of the Emperor Claudius and steward of the emperor's mother Antonia. Some scholars, *e.g.*, Ewald and Zeller, reject the statement of Josephus, and on the basis of *De ratione animalium*, 1. 72, suppose Philo to have been Alexander's uncle. But Josephus (*Antiq.* 20. 5. 2) speaks of a son of Alexander who bore the same name, and Schürer supposes that the passage in *De ratione animalium* refers to the son. See *Jewish People*, 2. 3. 323.

[2] See *De praemiis et poenis*, 9; *De opificio mundi*, 2. My citations are from the Leipsic edition of Philo, 1851.

[3] *De opificio mundi*, 1.

[4] *De Abrahamo*, 19.

the Pentateuch, Greek literature was the especial "pasture" of his soul. His writings abound in quotations from the classic poets and the great philosophers.[1] To him Plato was the man of "sweetest voice," and the Pythagorean philosophers were a "most sacred band."[2] It was when looking back on his study of Greek philosophy, no less than upon his study of the Pentateuch, that he uttered those memorable words: "I appeared to be raised on high and ever borne along by a certain inspiration of the soul, and to follow the sun and moon, the whole heaven and the cosmos."[3]

Now these two civilizations which with almost equal power had fascinated the soul of Philo were, for him, in their highest elements, identical. Greek philosophy was the same as the philosophy of Moses. Heraclitus and Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle, had derived their teachings from the Old Testament.[4] And the aim of Philo was to set forth and illustrate this harmony between the Jewish religion and classic philosophy, or, ultimately, it was to commend the Jewish religion to the educated Greek world. This was the high mission to which he felt called, the purpose with which he expounded the Hebrew laws in the language of the world's culture and philosophy.

[1] Siegfried, in his *Philo von Alexandrien als Ausleger des AT.*, 1. 137, counts sixty-four classic writers from whom Philo made citations.

[2] *Quod omnis probus liber*, 2. 1.

[3] *De spec. legum*, 3. 1.

[4] *Legis alleg.*, 1. 33; *Quod omnis probus liber*, 8. This thought that the Greek philosophers had borrowed from Moses was not original with Philo. It is found as early as the time of Aristobulus, who lived about 150 B.C. See Zeller, *Geschichte der griech. Phil.*, 3. 2. 347.

The way for Philo's work had long been prepared in the translation of the Old Testament into Greek. This was his forerunner and in an important degree the basis of his labors. His own knowledge of Hebrew was evidently slight,[1] for his writings show no trace of a literary appreciation of the Old Testament, neither does he seem to have been aware of the serious imperfections of the Greek version. He regarded it as the work of "hierophants and prophets to whom it had been granted, with their guileless minds, to go along with the most pure spirit of Moses."[2] He declared that they agreed in the employment of the same nouns and verbs as though an invisible prompter had suggested words to each one. Philo attributed the translation of the law to King Ptolemy Philadelphus (283–247 B.C.), and says that it was carried out by men sent down from Judea by the high priest. It was made, he thought, on the island of Pharos, where stood the celebrated lighthouse of Alexandria, and he says that down to his own day an annual festival was held on that island, participated in both by Jews and Gentiles, which, with thanksgiving to God, commemorated the work of the translation of the law — "that ancient piece of beneficence which was always young and fresh."[3]

This account is mainly free from those marvellous details which we find in Aristeas,[4] in Josephus,[5] and later

[1] See Siegfried, *op. cit.*, 1. 144.

[2] *Vita Mosis*, 2. 7.

[3] *Ibid.*, 2. 5–7.

[4] See Schürer, *Jewish People*, 2. 3. 306–312. Swete (*Introduction to the O. T. in Greek*, p. 12) thinks that the Alexandrian tradition which is represented in Philo may have been originally independent of the letter of Aristeas.

[5] See *Antiq.*, 12. 2.

in the Church Fathers,[1] and doubtless has a historical basis. We may regard it as evidence that the Law was done into Greek at Alexandria in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus,[2] though it seems more probable that the initiative was taken by the Jews than by the king.[3] Of the translation of other parts of the Old Testament little is known beyond these two facts, that the work was done with varying degrees of excellence and that it was completed in the second half of the second century before Christ.[4] Thus in the time of Philo[5] the Greek version of the Pentateuch was hallowed by an usage about as long as that which was enjoyed by our King James Bible (1611–1881 A.D.). Without it the work of Philo would have been impossible.

There was another and equally important preparation for this "greatest of uninspired Jewish writers of old." He had not only the Hebrew Scriptures in Greek, but he

[1] See, *e.g.*, Augustin, *De civ. dei*, 18. 42.

[2] Frankel (*Ueber den Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermeneutik*) extends the period in which the Pentateuch was translated as far as the close of the reign of Ptolemy Philopator (204 B.C.).

[3] Comp. Buhl, *Kanon und Text des A.T.*, p. 116.

[4] The Prologue of Ben Sirach, about 130 B.C., makes it plain that the Law, the Prophets, and part of the Hagiographa had been translated. Swete (*Introduction to the O.T. in Greek*) thinks it possible that some of the Hagiographa may have been translated much later. See Nestle, article "Septuagint," in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary;* Volk's article in the Schaff-Herzog; Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, and Schürer, *Jewish People*, 2. 3. 159–168.

[5] The only tolerably certain date of Philo's life is that of his mission to the Roman emperor Caligula, which was probably in the winter of 39–40 A.D. He was then an elderly man (see *Legatio ad Caium*, 1), whence is inferred that he was born 30–20 B.C. (Zeller), or 20–10 B.C. (Schürer).

had ready to hand a recognized principle of interpretation by which, as elaborated and used by him, he was able to make Moses and Plato teach the same doctrines. This was the principle of allegorical interpretation.

The Stoic philosopher Heraclitus (*cir.* 500 B.C.) defined allegory as the form of speech which says one thing, but means another.[1] He did not utterly set aside the literal meaning of texts which he interpreted allegorically, but regarded the hidden meaning as the all-important one. By means of this method of interpretation the Greek philosophers explained the poems of Homer and Hesiod. By its aid they removed from the text all contradictions and whatever seemed to them unworthy of the gods, and derived from it their own philosophical views. Thus they harmonized their philosophy with their sacred poets. It was this venerable mode of handling ancient writings and adapting them to later times which Philo used in his great endeavor to interpret the Jewish religion to the Greek world.

It is well known that Philo was not the first to put an allegorical interpretation on the laws of Moses. Aristobulus, who also was a Jewish philosopher and lived in Egypt (150 B.C.), was put by Origen[2] in the same class with Philo as an allegorical interpreter of the Law; and Pseudo-Aristeas, whose letter to his brother Philocrates is regarded by Gfrörer as much older than Philo[3] and which Schürer

[1] ὁ γὰρ ἄλλα μὲν ἀγορεύων τρόπος, ἕτερα δὲ ὧν λέγει σημαίνων, ἐπωνύμως ἀλληγορία καλεῖται.

[2] See *Contra Celsum*, 4. 51.

[3] See his *Philo und die jüdisch-alexandrinische Theosophie*, 2. 61–71.

confidently dates about 200 B.C.,[1] explained the law allegorically. Thus he said that the unclean birds, whose flesh was prohibited by Moses as a food, signified not only birds, but also violent men, and that the passage about animals that part the hoof taught that the Israelites should keep themselves separate from the wicked.[2] In the *Wisdom of Solomon*, also, which was probably written in Egypt in the first century B.C.,[3] we find an occasional allegorical interpretation, as when the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire are said to have been manifestations of wisdom,[4] and the high priest's robe is regarded as a symbol of the universe.[5] Siegfried held that allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament was everywhere current among the Hellenists in the first century before Christ.[6] But though Philo was not the first to read the Old Testament allegorically, he was the first to do it on a large scale and with distinguished ability. The principle long recognized and widely current was given its most conspicuous illustration in his writings.

There is yet another point which may best be noticed here, before we consider somewhat more closely Philo's interpretation of the Old Testament, and that is his view

[1] See *Jewish People*, 2. 3. 310.

[2] See Drummond, *Philo Judaeus*, 1. 239.

[3] See Schürer, *Jewish People*, 2. 3. 230–237.

[4] *Wisdom of Solomon*, 10. 17.

[5] *Ibid.*, 18. 24.

[6] On the relation of Philo to Palestinian interpretation, see Ritter, *Philo und die Halachah;* Lauterbach, *Philo's Relation to the Halakah*, Jewish Encyclopædia; Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. 2, Appendix 2; and Frankel, *Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermeneutik.*

of inspiration, for this clearly conditioned the results at which he arrived. Philo nowhere formally discusses the subject of inspiration, nor does he intimate that his own conception differed from that of his fellow-believers. It had two conspicuous features. First and most important of these was the passivity of the person inspired. Such a person was thought to be in a kind of trance or frenzy; all that he said was strange to himself; he was merely the sounding instrument of God's voice, invisibly struck and moved to sound by him.[1] The other conspicuous element in Philo's view of inspiration was that its natural result seemed to be the prediction of future events.[2] Thus Moses became inspired at the Red Sea that he might foretell what was soon to befall the Egyptians and Israel, and shortly before his death he became inspired and foretold admirably what should happen to himself after his death, relating how he died, though not yet having died, how he was buried with no one present, plainly not by mortal hands but by immortal powers, and how the whole nation mourned for him with tears a whole month.[3]

As a consequence of the complete suppression of the personality of the one inspired, all his words were wholly true and without any imperfection. They were also filled with a divine and infinite significance. This was most clearly the case with Moses, whom Philo set apart by

[1] See *De migratione Abrahami*, 7. 15; *Quis rerum div. haeres*, 52; and *De monarchia*, 1. 9.

[2] Gfrörer, *op. cit.*, 1. 54, seeks to distinguish two kinds of inspiration in Philo, — ἑρμηνεία and προφητεία, — but no clear ground for the distinction appears.

[3] *Vita Mosis*, 3. 39.

himself far above all other prophets. He was thought to have been the most pious of men, and in return to have been peculiarly honored by God, being made king, lawgiver, priest, and prophet.[1] Philo's estimate of the uniqueness of Moses appears not only in the lofty epithets applied to him, but also in the fact that the greater part of his numerous works are based on the Pentateuch.[2] It need only be added that Philo regarded the Greek translation of the Hebrew original as no less fully inspired than that.

Having now seen how the way for Philo's work was prepared and how he thought of inspiration, we come to a nearer view of his interpretation of the Old Testament. It may be said, in general, that every word of Scripture had for him two meanings, the literal and the allegorical.[3] There are instances where the literal meaning is rejected,[4] and there are passages of the Law to which no allegorical meaning is attached; but the former are relatively few in number, and the latter do not prove that Philo regarded them as *utterly* devoid of allegorical significance.[5]

These two meanings, the literal and the allegorical, were in Philo's thought like the body and the soul;[6] and though

[1] *Vita Mosis*, 3. 1, 24, 39.

[2] It appears from Ryle's collection of Old Testament quotations in the works of Philo that about $\frac{7}{15}$ of them are from Genesis and all but $\frac{1}{15}$ are from the Pentateuch. See Ryle, *Philo and Holy Scripture*. For a list of Philo's works, see Schürer, *Jewish People*, 2. 3. 327 f.

[3] *Quod deus sit immutabilis*, 11.

[4] *Legis alleg.*, 2. 7.

[5] See Zeller, *Geschichte der griech. Phil.*, 3. 2. 347, note 6.

[6] *De migratione Abrahami*, 16.

he did not ignore the former, his chief interest was plainly in the latter. He tells us that he had a natural love of the more recondite and laborious knowledge,[1] and this love was deepened by his conviction that the sacred oracles themselves urge the reader on to the pursuit of the allegorical meaning.[2]

Philo rejected the literal sense of a Scripture text when it appeared to be contradictory or unmeaning. Thus, commenting on Gen. 2 : 1, he says that it is "altogether silly to think that the world was created in six days, or indeed in time at all." We must understand that Moses is speaking not of a number of days, but that he merely takes six in a symbolical sense, as appropriate to the creation of mortal beings.[3] Thus he did away with the six days of creation as completely as have modern scientists, though in a more arbitrary manner.

A second illustration of the point under discussion is afforded by Philo's treatment of Gen. 2 : 21–22, the story regarding the origin of Eve. He declares it to be impossible to hold the literal s nse. "For how," he says, "can any one believe that out of the rib of a man there was made a woman, or a human being at all? What hindered the Creator from making woman out of the earth as he had made man? The one who made was the same, and the material was almost interminable."[4]

Thus Philo regarded the literal sense of these words as being inherently improbable. In this point, indeed, modern scholars are in agreement with Philo — they

[1] *De decalogo*, 1.
[2] *De plantatione Noe*, 9.
[3] *Legis alleg.*, 1. 2.
[4] *Legis alleg.*, 2. 7.

reject the literal sense. But they go with him no further. They do not treat the passage in an arbitrary manner, nor admit that its meaning is hidden.

To take yet another illustration. Philo declares that the literal sense of the statement in Gen. 4:17, that Cain built a city, is "not only strange, but contrary to all reason." For, in the first place, there were only three human beings in existence at that time. They had no need of a city; a small cave was a sufficient abode. And then, indeed, Cain could not have built the most trifling portion of a house without the assistance of other men. Was he able alone to cut stones and wood, to work in iron and brass, and to throw the vast circumference of walls around the city? Was he able to build up propylæa and temples and sacred precincts and porticoes and docks and houses and all the other public and private buildings which one is accustomed to find in a city?[1]

Philo often rejected the literal sense of a passage of Scripture not only because, as in the preceding instances, it appeared to him irrational in itself, but also when it seemed to be unworthy of God. Thus, he says it would be "impiety," as well as "incurable folly," to suppose that God literally planted a garden in Eden. For why should he have done so? That he might have pleasant dwelling places? But even the whole world cannot be considered a dwelling sufficient for God, the All Ruler.[2] Therefore Philo rejected the literal sense of all anthropomorphic

[1] *De posteritate Caini*, 14.
[2] *Legis alleg.*, 1. 14; *De plantatione Noe*, 8.

language which is used of God in Scripture, and saw in it only an allegorical meaning.

We have noticed the reasons which led Philo utterly to set aside the obvious meaning of certain passages of the Old Testament. It is to be added that, although the literal sense of the text is usually allowed to stand, it is practically lost sight of, because the hidden meaning is considered far more glorious. The historical Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, even the Samuel of history, are all more or less ghostly and unreal in Philo's writings, while the allegorical ideas behind those names are brought vividly forward.

It is plain that in his treatment of the literal sense of Scripture Philo was a law unto himself. The same is true of his allegorical interpretation. For though he speaks of the rules and laws of allegorical speech,[1] it is quite evident that we must take these terms as having had a very elastic significance. Different allegorists derived from the same text the most unlike meanings. Thus the tree of life in the garden clearly signified goodness to Philo, but others said that it meant the heart.[2] Some interpreters said that the cherubim whom God set on the east of the garden of Eden were symbols of the two hemispheres, which are placed opposite to each other,[3] but according to Philo they were symbols of God's creative and kingly power. The emeralds on the shoulders of the high priest were

[1] *De somniis*, 1. 13, 16–17. Siegfried, *op. cit.*, makes out more than twenty "laws" which governed Philo's interpretation.

[2] *Legis alleg.*, 1. 18.

[3] *Vita Mosis*, 3. 8.

thought by some to mean the sun and moon, while Philo saw in them the two hemispheres.[1]

Another evidence of the vagueness of Philo's "rules" of allegorical speech is the fact that they allowed him to discover in a single word or passage of Scripture a considerable number of wholly unrelated meanings. To illustrate: Adam was told that he might eat freely of every tree in the garden except one. Now this expression "to eat freely" means either to take food as a wrestler does, thoroughly masticating it, or it means to honor the parents with understanding, or again it means to honor God properly.[2] Siegfried [3] has collected passages which show that the name "Joseph" was interpreted by Philo in no less than six ways, meaning, in one passage, "statesman," in another "sophist," and in a third "materialist." To the word "sun" are given such varying significations as "human mind," "sensibility," the "divine word," and the "invisible God."[4] Yet one more illustration. The words addressed to Adam, "Where art thou?" admit, according to Philo, of being interpreted in many ways. By altering the accent on the Greek particle *πού* (where), we get the positive statement "thou art somewhere," which teaches, *by implication*, that God is *everywhere*, while man is in some particular spot. Again, the words may mean, "Where hast thou been?" *i.e.* "what *evils* hast thou chosen?" And finally, the words may be a simple question, to which the proper answer would be,

[1] *Vita Mosis*, 3. 12.
[2] *Legis alleg.*, 1. 37.
[3] *Op. cit.*, 1. 193.
[4] *De somniis*, 1. 13, 14, 15.

"Nowhere," for "the soul of the wicked man has no place to which it can go."[1]

In view of these facts it is clear that Philo's "laws" of allegorical interpretation were not of the nature of definite scientific principles. This will appear further as we consider his laws in detail. They are nowhere presented by themselves; Philo did not write on the science of interpretation; but they may be gathered from various parts of his works. It will be sufficient to advert to the more important of these so-called laws.

It has already been observed that, in Philo's thought, the sacred oracles themselves most evidently conduct us toward allegory. They are supposed to do this, in the first place, by the repetition of a word or thought. Thus when a heavenly voice called Abraham's name twice, it was to turn him from the completion of the sacrifice,[2] and when the name "man" is spoken twice, it indicates that the *virtuous* man is meant.[3] The peculiar Hebrew expression, "to die the death" means, according to Philo, the death of the soul, which is accomplished when vice is admitted into it.[4]

Again, anything unexpected, whether in the form of a word, or in its choice, or its position in the sentence, is a plain indication to the wise man that we should search out some hidden meaning. Why, *e.g.*, since Cain was older than Abel, is Abel mentioned first in Gen. 4:2? The answer is plain to Philo. Moses wished to teach in this manner that wickedness is older than virtue in point of time, but

[1] *Legis alleg.*, 3. 17.
[2] *De Abrahamo*, 32.
[3] *De gigantibus*, 8.
[4] *Legis alleg.*, 1. 33; *De profugis*, 10.

younger in power and rank.[1] Further, when God changed the name of Abraham's wife, it was only by the doubling of a single letter,[2] at which slight alteration, says Philo, some foolish persons might laugh; but one letter in this case has the numerical value of one hundred, and this number, he declares, has "begotten all harmony, for the small it has made the great, for the particular the general, for the mortal the immortal." "By a total change, God transforms the part into the whole, the species into the genus, the corruptible into the incorruptible."[3]

With this last illustration we have touched a third important "law" of allegorical speech; namely, that numbers have a deep hidden meaning. Philo derived this doctrine from the Greek philosophers, in particular from the Pythagoreans.[4] True, he considered Moses the master in this department of knowledge as in all others,[5] and doubtless thought that he was disclosing the lawgiver's deeper meaning in his explanation of the numbers of the Law; but, in reality, the hidden meaning of numbers is wholly foreign to the Old Testament.[6] Certain numbers have there, it is true, a kind of sacredness, as seven, ten, twelve, and forty, but the sole ground of this sacredness

[1] *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, 4.

[2] Philo has the Greek forms in mind — *οὐ κληθήσεται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῆς Σάρα, ἀλλὰ Σάρρα ἔσται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῆς.*

[3] *Quaest. et sol. in Gen.*, 3. 53.

[4] See Zeller, *Geschichte der griech. Phil.*, 1. 1. 343; 3. 2. 120, 391.

[5] See, *e.g.*, *De opificio mundi*, 43.

[6] See Ed. König in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, article "Number." Siegfried, *op. cit.*, 1. 16, thinks there is a slight basis for the allegorical interpretation of numbers in Ezek. 4:4–8 and Dan. 9:24.

is historical. It is not mathematical or philosophical.[1]

The investigation of numbers appealed to Philo most deeply, and he never tired of drawing forth new and wondrous thoughts from their Scripture use. He was the equal, as Zeller says, of any Pythagorean. Yet he did not altogether adopt the views of these philosophers. He evidently did not regard number as the essence of all things, the very substance and material of which all things consist, or as the original thought of God; and, naturally, he could not consider numbers as gods and goddesses. His monotheism forbade this. Yet he agreed with the Pythagoreans in the meaning of many numbers, in the significant relation of numbers to figures,[2] and still more in the arbitrary method of handling them. These points will be illustrated as we proceed. There is perhaps no element in Philo's interpretation which appears to us in this age more utterly irrational and absurd than this allegorizing of Scripture numbers, but there was certainly none on which he himself dwelt so fondly.

Another of Philo's "laws" of allegory was to use the etymologies of proper names. He usually started from the Greek rendering of the Hebrew names, and proceeded with the utmost freedom. His method and its results may be sufficiently indicated by his handling of the names of the four rivers mentioned in Gen. 2 : 11–14. "Pishon" he derives from a Greek verb (*φείδομαι*) meaning *to spare, to abstain from*, and he takes the word in the sense

[1] See Keil, *Biblical Archæology*, 1. 127, 133–137.

[2] See, *e.g.*, *De opificio mundi*, 32.

of *prudence*, for prudence *abstains* from iniquity. From the name of the second river, "Gihon," Philo obtained, by some unknown etymology, the two meanings *chest* and *butting with the horns;* and then taking these as symbols, he interpreted Gihon to mean *courage.* Out of "Tigris," the name of the third river of Eden, he derived the meaning *temperance*, and in the following singular manner. He took the word as identical with the Greek for "tiger" (*τίγρις*). The tiger he regarded as a symbol of desire. Now as temperance has to do intimately with desire, he concluded that the river denoted temperance. The name "Euphrates" he derived from the Greek verb *to be glad* (*εὐφραίνω*), and gave it the meaning *fertility*, and from this he passed to the idea of "justice," since this is most truly a *fertile* virtue.[1] Thus the four rivers of the old record became, under the hand of Philo, the four cardinal virtues — prudence, courage, temperance, and justice!

One other illustration of Philo's use of proper names may be added for the sake of its ingeniousness. The name "Terah," he says, means "the investigation of a smell." Hence Terah, the father of Abraham, died, as was fitting, in "Haran," which signifies the metropolis of the outward senses, for he was merely an explorer of virtue, not a citizen. He was not able to fill himself with wisdom, nor indeed even to get a taste of it, but only to *smell* it.[2] These illustrations of Philo's treatment of proper names need not be increased. They show that his method was fanciful

[1] *Legis alleg.*, I. 20–21.
[2] *De somniis*, 9.

and arbitrary in the extreme, and wholly without scientific value.

There is yet one feature of Philo's allegorical interpretation which we may suppose that he included when he spoke of "laws." It is that all objects whatsoever have each one its hidden meaning or meanings. Thus heaven denotes mind; earth, sensation.[1] A field is the symbol of revolt and contention, because battles usually take place on open ground;[2] irrational passions are symbolized by sheep;[3] a ring denotes, among other things, the form which God stamps on the individual soul;[4] a well is an emblem of knowledge, for its nature is not superficial, but very deep;[5] the garment which was to be restored to a debtor before sunset (Ex. 22:26) signified speech, for as a garment is a kind of defensive armor, so speech is a most "impregnable protection."[6] To these might be added scores of illustrations, usually ingenious, sometimes suggestive, always arbitrary.

Having now spoken of the most important "laws" of allegorical interpretation to be found in the writings of Philo, we will next cite a few instances of their practical application, that we may clearly see what the Old Testament became in his hands. On the fourth day of creation, says Philo, after God had embellished the earth, he diversified and adorned the heaven, and it is a matter of endless significance to the interpreter that this was done

[1] *Legis alleg.*, 8.
[2] *De eo quod det. pot. insidiatur*, 1.
[3] *De plantatione Noe*, 10.
[4] *De somniis*, 2. 6.
[5] *Ibid.*, 1. 2.
[6] *Ibid.*, 1. 17.

on the *fourth* day.[1] This number is the origin and source of the "all-perfect decade," for the numerals from one to four, when added together, make ten. Four comprehends the principles of the harmonious concords in music; four displays the nature of the solid cube; it is the first number which is a square; it was the foundation of the creation of the whole heaven and the whole world; the four elements and the four seasons flowed from it "as from a fountain."

Again, the most weighty detail in the entire account of creation was, according to Philo, the statement that God hallowed the *seventh* day. More than one-fifth of his treatise is devoted to an unfolding of the meaning of this number. Philo doubts whether any one is able to celebrate its nature in an adequate manner.[2] It has "great sanctity"; it is the only thing free from motion and accident; it displays a "great and comprehensive power"; it improves all terrestrial things and even the periods of the moon.[3] Man's life falls into divisions of seven years; the constellation of the Bear has seven stars, which guide the sailor by innumerable paths across the sea; the Pleiads are seven; the dominant part of the mind is divided into seven parts; the external members of the body are seven, likewise the internal members; there are seven changes of the voice, seven motions of which we are capable, and dangerous diseases are decided about the seventh day.[4] In view of such facts this number was honored by the greatest of the Greeks and of the barbarians who were

[1] *De opificio mundi*, 14, 15, 16.
[2] *Ibid.*, 30.
[3] *Ibid.*, 33, 34.
[4] *Ibid.*, 35, 39, 40, 41.

devoted to mathematics. Moses, too, held it in highest esteem.

In his *Life of Moses*, after describing the dress of the high priest, Philo explains its meaning substantially as follows: The whole is a copy of the world; the tunic is the air; the flowers are the earth; the pomegranates are water; the bells are an emblem of the harmony that exists between the foregoing things; and the mantle over the shoulders is an emblem of heaven. For this last item in his interpretation the author says that he is able to bring forth twenty probable reasons.[1] In Gen. 7 : 9 the water of the Flood is said to have covered the highest mountains to a depth of fifteen cubits. This statement, says Philo, must be taken allegorically. The loftier mountains represent the senses, because they are allowed to occupy the abode of stability in the lofty region of the head. Now there are five of the senses, and each is threefold; thus we get the *fifteen* cubits. And the overwhelming of the mountains signifies that the senses are destroyed by the influx of vice.[2]

Again, the question is asked why the woman first ate of the tree and the man afterwards, receiving the fruit from her, and it is answered in this manner: The letter, by its own intrinsic force, asserts that it was suitable that immortality and every good thing should be represented as under the power of the man, but death and every evil under that of the woman. Understood symbolically, the woman is sense, the man is intellect. Now as the senses touch those things which are perceptible by them, and as the intellect

[1] *Vita Mosis*, 3. 12. [2] *Quaest. et sol.*, 2. 21.

is influenced by the senses, so it was necessary that the woman should eat first and man afterwards, receiving the fruit from her.[1]

These illustrations of Philo's exegesis must suffice, and we proceed to some general concluding remarks. And, in the first place, it must be said that this exegesis is characterized by an utter lack of the sense of proportion. This is seen, *e.g.*, in the fact that what is incidental is treated as essential, and the essential is often utterly ignored or is treated as incidental. Philo does not see the forest for the trees. The historical significance of great characters, like Abraham, is lost in a multitude of fanciful details. An insignificant number receives more attention than a moral principle or the creation of the universe. Again, the lack of proportion is seen in the fact that Philo took almost no account of the devotional parts of the Old Testament, or of the Prophets. For him Moses was the perfect interpreter of the divine will. He had no appreciation of a growth of revelation after the time of Moses. If he mentioned the Prophets, it was simply as disciples of the lawgiver. It is obvious, therefore, that, as an interpreter of the Old Testament, Philo was extremely partial and fragmentary.

In the second place, his exegesis was characterized by two presuppositions, either one of which alone must have seriously detracted from its value, and which, taken together, made it quite impossible for him soundly to interpret the writings of the Old Testament. These presuppositions were, first, that the words of Scripture have a

[1] *Quaest. et sol.*, I. 37.

twofold sense, and second, that they were miraculously inspired. In working out the first of these presuppositions, Philo became the master of all who, abandoning the plain sense of the text or slighting it, have substituted for it a sense purely imaginary.[1] The second presupposition was not more conspicuous in his writings than in the average Christian commentator during the next fifteen centuries.

And finally, Philo's exegesis was everywhere strongly colored by his philosophical conceptions. As has been said already, he believed that the Greek philosophers derived their true doctrines from Moses. Therefore his interpretation of Moses is full of views borrowed from classic writings. Philo is the master of all who have read into the Bible what they have brought from elsewhere. To show how fully he did this would require a survey of his entire philosophical system, but a very brief statement will suffice to establish the fact itself. We have shown above that the Greek doctrine of the hidden significance of numbers was regarded by Philo as a part of the excellent knowledge of the Hebrew lawgiver. The same is true of the Platonic doctrine of ideas. Before God created the visible world, he created one which is perceptible only by the intellect, an incorporeal model of the world which is seen.[2] Accordingly, every object perceived by the senses was made in the image of a preëxistent invisible pattern. Before God created man upon the earth, he fashioned an archetypal heavenly man in whom there was no corruptible

[1] Comp. Zeller, *Geschichte der griech. Phil.*, 3. 2. 351.
[2] *De opificio mundi*, 4.

element.[1] Or take the many-sided *Logos* doctrine of Philo. Whatever kinship there may be at certain points between this doctrine and "wisdom" in Proverbs or the "Memra" of later Jewish writings, it certainly has no clear starting-point in the Pentateuch. But Philo uses this conception freely in his interpretation of Moses. Thus he represents the lawgiver as teaching that the human mind was made in the similitude of the *Logos;*[2] that the *Logos* is the interpreter of God;[3] that he is an archangel, neither created nor uncreated, an ambassador from God to the subject race of mankind, and a suppliant to God on behalf of mortals.[4] In this doctrine, though something may be attributed to the speculative mind of Philo, we have in the main Greek conceptions.

For the present purpose it is not necessary to continue these illustrations. In his doctrine of God and the soul, and in his ethics, Philo's interpretation of the Pentateuch has been fructified by Greek philosophy. For this reason, therefore, as well as for the two fundamental reasons previously mentioned, the work of the famous Alexandrian, whose vast influence on the Christian Church we shall notice in subsequent chapters, was without real value as an aid to the understanding of the Old Testament.

[1] *Quaest. et sol.*, 1. 4; *Legis alleg.*, 1. 12.
[2] *Quaest. et sol.*, 2. 62.
[3] *De nominibus*, 3.
[4] *Quis rerum div.*, etc., 42.

CHAPTER III

THE OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETED IN THE NEW

I. The Interpretation of the Old Testament by Jesus

THE scene in the Temple at Jerusalem where Jesus, now twelve years of age, sat among the leading Jewish rabbis, both hearing them and asking them questions, and amazing them by his understanding of Scripture, clearly indicates that here was a boy on whose mind the Old Testament had exercised a very unusual power. For before the curtain falls on this striking scene in the Temple, we hear certain words of Jesus spoken to his mother, which plainly suggest that his knowledge of the Old Testament was not simply an acquaintance with its letter, but was rather a spiritual understanding of its content (Luke 2 : 46–50). He speaks of being engaged in the things of his "Father" — an intimation, surely, that as he had read the Old Testament by the light of his pure heart, he had found there the fatherhood of God, that truth which was to determine his entire career. Thus this early scene suggests what the public ministry of Jesus abundantly confirms, that the knowledge which surprised the great doctors was a knowledge which penetrated beneath the letter of Scripture into its vital revelation. If this be true, then the glimpse which Luke gives into

the boyhood of Jesus justifies us in anticipating that this same person, grown to manhood and appearing as a religious teacher in Israel, will inaugurate a new epoch in the interpretation of the ancient writings of his nation.[1]

The personal attitude of Jesus toward the institutions of the Law is a valuable source of information regarding the method and results of his exegesis, for his interpretation was never professional, but altogether practical. From the point of view of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus, during his public ministry, certainly appeared to be in large measure a lawless man. That part of the religious ordinances that he kept was much less than that which he did not keep. This latter class of ordinances were not found in the written law, it is true, but they were regarded as its authoritative interpretation, and hence as absolutely binding on the conscience. It had come to pass that the "hedge" was more sacred than the Law around which it was set, the words of the wise sweeter than the wine of the Torah. The authority of the scribe had become superior to that of the written law.[2]

By Jesus, however, this oral law was sharply discriminated from Scripture. He referred to it as a plant that his heavenly Father had not planted, and which for that reason should be rooted up (Matt. 15 : 13). In some instances he regarded the traditions as diametrically

[1] This prophecy of Jesus' boyhood was fulfilled, as we shall see, and yet to this day his exegesis of the Old Testament has been almost entirely ignored. It has been treated indiscriminately with that of the New Testament writers.

[2] See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, pp. 105–109, 125–134; Mark 7 : 11–12.

opposed to the commandment of God, so that the transgression of the commandment was a necessary consequence of loyalty to the tradition (*e.g.* Matt. 15 : 3-6). He spoke of the rites imposed by the scribes and Pharisees as a heavy burden and grievous to be borne (Matt. 23 : 4; comp. Acts 15 : 11). The typical[1] Pharisee was a man whose religion he rated very low (*e.g.* Luke 18 : 9-14; Matt. 23 : 13-36). Thus Jesus stood forth even from the beginning of his ministry as one who made a sweeping and fundamental discrimination between the current *interpretation* of Scripture and the Scripture itself. He claimed the right to go to the sources. In this procedure he was doubtless guided, not by any critical knowledge of the unlike origins of the oral and the written law, but solely by his spiritual insight. The significance of this appeal of Jesus to the Old Testament itself, rejecting the immemorial traditions of the Jewish Church, is not to be underestimated in any attempt to judge of him as an interpreter of the sacred writings of his people. The fact of this appeal raised him far above all the rabbis of his nation, and was the first step toward a valid estimate of the Old Testament. The movement in the modern Church to turn away from all traditional theology and to go back to a fresh study of Scripture as the basis of its belief, though not directly due to the example of Jesus, is certainly in full accord with it.

[1] In *Berachoth* seven classes of Pharisees are described, of which only one is wholly commended, viz., the class who, like Abraham, fulfil the law out of love. There may well have been some men in the time of Jesus who belonged to this class.

But the bold act of Jesus in disregarding the oral law was hardly less striking than the character of his interpretation of the written law. Consider first that interpretation which is conspicuously made known in his life. Jesus recognized, indeed, the divine institution of the Sabbath, but took at the same time such a liberal view of it that a deadly hostility toward him was the result. He held quite positively that man is greater than the Sabbath (Mark 2 : 27), therefore he did not hesitate to continue his ministry of healing on that day, nor did he restrain his disciples from plucking heads of grain to satisfy their hunger. This act he thought to be well within the scriptural understanding of Sabbath observance. For the story of David (1 Sam. 21 : 1–6), who ate the shewbread contrary to the letter of Lev. 24 : 9, teaches that human need, such as his disciples had experienced, is of more importance than the statute regarding the shewbread, and so by parity of reasoning of more importance than the statutes regarding the Sabbath. And, in the judgment of Jesus, his disciples were also sheltered by the Old Testament principle that God prefers mercy to sacrifice (Matt. 9 : 13; 12 : 7; Hos. 6 : 1); in other words, that the law of the Sabbath is plainly subordinated to the higher law of mercy.[1]

Not without significance in its bearing on the exegetical method of Jesus is the argument with which he justified his healing of a cripple on the Sabbath, for which act the

[1] Even the critics of Jesus recognized the validity of this principle (*e.g.* Luke 14 : 1–6; Matt. 12 : 11–12), but were not consistent in its application.

Jews were persecuting him (John 5:9–18). On this occasion he insisted on an interpretation of the Sabbath law in the light of God's own example. "My Father worketh even until now," said he, "and I work," that is to say, the Father works on the Sabbath.[1] Thus the revelation of God in Nature and life furnished, at least in one instance, a guide for the interpretation of a written statute; and the fact that Jesus appealed to this revelation is one of the evidences that his interpretation of the law rested on profound and comprehensive thought.

Noticeable in this connection is Jesus' treatment of lepers. On two occasions (Mark 1:44; Luke 17:14) he directed persons whom he had cured of leprosy to go to the priests and perform the statutory rites. They were not to imagine that the extraordinary method of their cure released them from their ordinary obligations as Israelites. It should be noticed, however, that, while Jesus here recognized the statute regarding leprosy, he did not rebuke that leper who, contrary to the law, had come into the house where he was lodging, nor did he rebuke the Samaritan leper who, before he had been ceremonially cleansed of his leprosy, came into his presence, which also was against the statute (Lev. 13:45–46; 14). We may suppose that, in one case, the man's trust, in the other, his gratitude, atoned in the sight of Jesus for an infraction of the letter of the law.

[1] The rabbis in their glorification of the Torah went so far as to affirm that God observes all the statutes of the Sabbath. See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, pp. 17–18.

Thus it appears [1] that Jesus recognized the institutions of the Law as clothed with sacred authority, but that his interpretation of the statutes regarding them was in a remarkably broad and liberal spirit.[2] He supported his interpretation not only out of the Scriptures, recognizing there a higher and a lower, and interpreting Scripture by Scripture, but he supported it also by appeals to the reason, the experience, and the moral instincts of man.

The method of interpreting the Old Testament which is thus reflected in the life of Jesus also runs through his teaching. It is to be noticed here at the outset that Jesus regarded the Law and the Prophets, that is, the entire Old Testament (Matt. 7:12; Luke 16:29), as constituting a true unity. He summed up the ethical teaching of both in the single principle that we should do to others as we would have them do to us (Matt. 7:12); and again, in regard to the two commandments enjoining love to God and love toward the neighbor, he declared that all the prophets, no less than the entire law, hang upon them (Matt. 22:40; Deut. 6:4–5; Lev. 19:18). According to this declaration, the main divisions of the Old Testament were unified, in the thought of Jesus, by a common ethical teaching. We may also say that they were unified for him by a common Messianic element, for it is plain that he found such an element both in the Law and in the Prophets (*e.g.* Matt. 5:12; Luke 24:27; John 5:46).

[1] For further illustrations, see Matt. 17:24–27; Mark 14:12–25.

[2] Dr. Sanders, in his introduction to MacFarland's *Jesus and the Prophets*, well says of Jesus that he was "the first free spiritual expounder of the Scriptures."

Thus, notwithstanding the wide differences between law and prophecy, which Jesus surely appreciated more fully by far than any other student of the Bible has ever done, and notwithstanding the ethical imperfections of the Law, which he pointed out, especially in the Sermon on the Mount, the Old Testament was to him an organic whole.

Again, the Old Testament, taken as a whole, was regarded by Jesus as containing a divine revelation. Moses and the Prophets, he said in the parable of the *Rich Man and Lazarus*, were sufficient to teach mercy and to show one the way to Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:29). His own instruction often echoed that of the Old Testament. Thus what he said of the meek and of those who mourn, of the merciful and the pure in heart, has parallels more or less complete in the Psalms and the Prophets.[1] The principle of love which he recognized as the culmination of Old Testament teaching was fundamental in his own life and words. Even Moses' seat he recognized as a seat of authority (Matt. 23:2), and warned men against imagining that he had come to antagonize the old order, as though it were not of God (Matt. 5:17). The fact that he represented his own teaching as a development or fulfilment of the old order, implies that, in his thought, Moses and the Prophets were channels of divine revelation, even as he was.

But though Jesus recognized a certain unity in the Old Testament, and saw in it a divine revelation, he did not regard it as a *homogeneous* book, each part of which was as

[1] See, *e.g.*, Ps. 37:11; Is. 61:1–2; 2 Sam. 22:26; Ps. 24:4.

good and as true as any other part. Superior to all the ceremonial commandments, such as circumcision, sacrifices, tithes, and feasts, was the injunction to love God and the fellow-man. This same broad distinction between the ethical and the ceremonial elements in the Old Testament is seen in Christ's arraignment of the Pharisees (Matt. 23). He charged them with hypocrisy because they were scrupulous in tithing even mint, anise, and cummin, while at the same time they neglected justice, mercy, and faith. These things were "weightier," he said, than the others, and their observance therefore more important.

And Jesus not only distinguished between the ethical and the ceremonial, but also between various ethical elements. While there were some precepts, as we have already seen, which he wholly welcomed, there were others which he unhesitatingly set aside as affording no adequate standard for the members of his kingdom (*e.g.* Matt. 5:31–32). The practice of divorce, sanctioned by the law in view of the hardness of man's heart, he condemned as immoral (Matt. 5:32), and a principle not found in the legislative part of the Pentateuch was declared to be the true standard (Gen. 2:24). Hatred of enemies, which seemed to be involved in Lev. 19:18 and which was also contained in "the spirit of the Israelitish law" in general, he not only discountenanced, but taught that it was the exact opposite of what God wished for man. In the Sermon on the Mount he clearly asserted that the ethics of the Decalogue were quite too rudimentary to be suitable for his kingdom (*e.g.* Matt. 5:21–26, 27–28, 33–37).

In view of such facts as these, it admits of no question

that, if an infallible book is one that contains no imperfections in its teaching, Jesus cannot be cited as a witness for the infallibility of the Old Testament; and if an inspired book is one whose statements are all true and all fit together, forming a symmetrical whole, then he cannot be cited as a witness for the inspiration of the Old Testament. This doctrine of inspiration and infallibility, so long and so vigorously supported as a corner-stone of the Christian religion, is flatly against the conception of Scripture which Jesus entertained.

It remains to speak of Jesus' interpretation of the Messianic element in the Old Testament. This was as widely different from the current views, both in method and result, as was his interpretation of Old Testament law and ethics. He saw in the Scriptures a foreshadowing of his life and work, but he saw no predictions. He saw a Messiah foreshadowed who was not a king on David's throne, but an itinerant prophet, a man with no other authority than the authority of the truth, one who was to sacrifice everything to bring home to men the love of God.

The nature and extent of this Old Testament foreshadowing appears when we consider some of the words of Jesus. On a certain occasion Jesus read, in the synagogue at Nazareth, the opening verses of Is. 61 and declared their fulfilment in him (Luke 4: 18–21). Now it is obvious that the Old Testament author of this passage was *himself* divinely anointed to preach glad tidings unto the meek. His words prove that the Spirit of Jehovah rested abundantly upon him. They cannot, therefore,

have referred in any *exclusive* sense to the coming Messiah, and there is no indication that Jesus saw in them such a predictive reference. He simply knew in himself that he could translate the old vision into life as it had never yet been translated. In this sense he was conscious of fulfilling it.

It is a fact full of significance that when the Baptist sent from his prison to ask Jesus whether he was indeed the coming one, the Master gave him an indirect answer, telling the messengers to inform John of what he was doing and leaving him to draw his own inference (Matt. 11:2–6). But that which Jesus was just then doing corresponded in a marvellous manner to certain visions of Isaiah (*e.g.*, chap. 35) regarding the blessing which Jehovah would some day bring to his people. We cannot say that it corresponded as face answers to face in a glass, for the realization was far more glorious than the vision. It is to be noticed also that there was nothing in the correspondence that could *compel* belief in the Messiahship of Jesus even on the part of one who, like the Baptist, was longing for certainty. "Blessed is he," said Jesus, "whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me." It was possible, therefore, for any one to see these works of Jesus, even any one who was acquainted with the Messianic hope of the Old Testament, and yet not to accept him as the Messiah.

The Messianic fulfilment which Jesus gave was plainly not of the nature of a rigorous demonstration. One man might see in him a convincing realization of certain Old Testament pictures of the coming Deliverer, and another

might discover an equally convincing *lack* of such a realization. To the Jews of Jesus' own day, with the partial exception of a small circle of followers, he did *not* answer to the Old Testament expectations. This fact clearly indicates that the prophetic pictures of the Messianic deliverance were various in character and susceptible of widely varying interpretations, and it indicates also that the ministry of Jesus was not a literal fulfilment of *any* of these various pictures.

The most frequent Messianic references which Jesus made to the Old Testament are found in connection with the thought of his death.[1] And yet the allusions of Jesus to his death do not all have Messianic associations. He sometimes spoke of his death as the ordinary fate of a prophet. The "beloved son" in the parable of the *Wicked Husbandmen* is but the last of a series of messengers who have been wounded or killed (Mark 12:1–8). And again, when Jesus said that a prophet could not perish out of Jerusalem (Luke 13:33), he evidently thought of his death at the hands of his countrymen as being only that which the bitter experience of a long line of prophets might lead him to expect.

Of those allusions which have a Messianic color some are general, not pointing to any particular Old Testament

[1] Hühn, *Die alttestamentlichen Citate und Reminiscenzen im N.T.*, p. 269, counts fourteen passages cited by Jesus as Messianic, four of which are in John, but says that he applied directly to himself only six of these at the most, viz., those which speak of "the acceptable year," the "corner stone," of being "hated without ground," of being "reckoned with transgressors," of the "shepherd," and "David's Lord."

passage.[1] No one of these goes beyond the simple thought of rejection and suffering. The four Old Testament passages concerning the Messiah's fate, to which Jesus alluded in such a manner that we are able to identify them, are all likewise general in character. Two of them contain the idea of rejection, but not necessarily of death.[2] The others when taken with their context imply death.[3] No one of these four is of the nature of a prediction regarding the Messiah.

The passage in Psalms in regard to the rejected "stone" records an *experience*, primarily, though it is uncertain *whose* experience. It is Messianic in the sense that what the psalmist said of himself, or of Israel, or of the faithful in Israel, was applicable in the highest degree to Jesus. He also was rejected and was afterward made the corner-stone of God's living temple. In like manner, the narrative of Jonah describes an *experience* (in the main imaginary, if not entirely so). It tells what befell a certain prophet, and the unique fate of this man was taken by Jesus as in some sense parallel to his own. The sign which should be given to his generation was to be a Jonah-sign. But what was that? Luke gives no answer to this question, nor does Matthew in 16:4. In Matt. 12:38–42 the sign is made to consist in the episode of the sea-monster.[4]

[1] There are perhaps only five of these, viz., Mark 9:12; 14:21; 8:31; Matt. 26:54; Luke 24:44.

[2] Ps. 118; Jonah 1:17. — Matt. 12:38–42; 16:4; Luke 11:29–32; Matt. 21:42.

[3] Is. 53; Zech. 13. — Luke 22:37; Matt. 26:31.

[4] Clemen, *Der Gebrauch des AT. in den neutestamentlichen Schriften*, p. 24, defends this explanation.

Had these words, however, been a part of the original tradition, it would be strange that Luke did not incorporate them in his narrative. But further, the wholly spiritual use which Jesus uniformly made of the prophets increases one's inclination to seek the meaning of the "sign" elsewhere than in the passage about the sea-monster. Jesus may well have seen a general parallel between his mission and that of Jonah. As this prophet had been sent to preach to Nineveh, so he, too, had been sent to men with a message of repentance and pardon. Now the apparent failure of the divine purpose in the case of the elder prophet and the ultimate realization of that purpose, may have suggested to Jesus — when, through the increasing hostility of the Jews, the time was ripe for such a suggestion — that his own temporary defeat would be followed by triumph. In this manner, at least, the use of the "sign" would be intelligible. But even if Matthew's words be adopted as giving the thought of Jesus, it is plain that they are not predictive, for Jonah in the story did not die, but the Jesus of history did.

The prophecy in Zechariah (13:7) was cited by Jesus in illustrative justification of what he had just said about the scattering of his disciples. It was not adduced as a Scripture foreshadowing of his own death. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah appears to have been alluded to when Jesus said that he must be numbered with transgressors. Yet he cited this word as one that might apply to many others as well as to himself. How Jesus regarded this chapter of Isaiah as a whole, in what sense he thought it prophetic of himself, we cannot infer from this citation.

Such were the words of Jesus regarding a Messianic element in the Old Testament. He saw there foreshadowings of his work and fate, but these foreshadowings were general in character. He saw them in the unrealized aspirations of the great teachers of Israel, in the unfulfilled visions of God's reign among men. He saw them in the fate of the prophets in whose line he was conscious that he himself stood. But there is no evidence that Jesus saw a predictive element in the Old Testament; no evidence that, in his thought, any Old Testament author had foreseen his historical appearance, the circumstances of his ministry, his death and resurrection. According to his view, the Messianic foreshadowing was altogether unlike the idea of prediction. It was spiritual, not outward and mechanical. It belonged to the ancient revelation in its entirety, to the Law and the Psalms as well as to the Prophets: it was by no means limited to a number of specific sayings which mentioned the coming one, or were supposed to give details of his ministry.

The Messianic foreshadowing of the old revelation, according to Jesus, consisted in its imperfection coupled with its longing for a more perfect manifestation of God; and therefore, as Jesus was the conscious possessor of a perfect knowledge of the divine will, he was able perfectly to appreciate this foreshadowing. His new interpretation of the Messianic element in the Old Testament was not based on a historical knowledge unlike that of his day and superior to it, but rather on his spiritual vision. He knew the prophets because he was himself a prophet; he understood their aspirations, for his own were like them, only deeper and more pure.

And what qualified Jesus to interpret the Messianic element in the Old Testament, let it be said in conclusion, was his chief qualification also for the interpretation of all besides this element. He did not have a critical knowledge of Hebrew or Greek, or the origin of the Old Testament writings. He apparently accepted the current Aramaic and Greek translations of the Old Testament, even as others did. Of what in modern times is regarded as technical qualification for scientific exegesis, he had, of course, no more than had the generation to which he belonged. But the lack of critical knowledge was more than outweighed by his unique spiritual penetration, by his perfect comprehension of the scope of the entire Old Testament, and by his unerring judgment of moral values.[1] With this spiritual equipment he gave, even in the midst of an uncritical and unhistorical age, an interpretation of the Old Testament, of the great and vital questions of revelation, which, in its proportion, its appreciation of the past, and in the certainty of its results, still furnishes to Christian scholarship an unapproached ideal.

[1] This spiritual equipment saved the interpretation of Jesus from the errors of the rabbis. Clemen, *op. cit.*, p. 60, asserts that there is not a single instance of artificial rabbinic exegesis, or a historically false application, in all the quotations of Jesus from the O. T. Some may regard this statement as a little too sweeping in view of Matt. 22 : 37 (comp. Toy, *Quotations in the N. T.*, pp. 59–60), but it is hardly possible to lay too much emphasis on the true exegetical value of the equipment of Jesus.

II. Interpretation of the Old Testament by the Writers of the New

The authors of the New Testament may be represented, for our present purpose, by Paul, the first and fourth evangelists, and the unknown man or woman who composed the Epistle to the Hebrews. These four make by far the largest use of the Old Testament,[1] and since we judge of the exegesis of New Testament writers chiefly by their quotations from the Old Testament, the writers designated afford ample ground for a satisfactory view of the earliest Christian interpretation. There are no characteristics of that interpretation which are not found in them.

These writers whose exegesis we are to consider, and all other New Testament writers as well, interpreted the Old Testament at second hand, through the Greek translation, probably to some extent also through an Aramaic version, and not directly from the Hebrew original.[2] It is doubtful whether any New Testament writer except Paul was acquainted with Hebrew, and in seven cases out of eight

[1] Swete, *Introduction to the O. T. in Greek*, p. 386, counts approximately 160 quotations from the O. T. in the New, and of these much the larger part are found in the four writers mentioned above. To Paul are ascribed 78 quotations, to Matthew 46, to John 12, and to Hebrews 28. Hühn, *Die alttestamentlichen Citate*, etc., p. 269, with a somewhat different standard, counts 286 quotations, of which he ascribes 88 to Paul, 52 to Matthew, 15 to John, and 36 to Hebrews. Böhl, *Alttestamentliche Citate im N. T.*, finds but 17 quotations in the Catholic Epistles and one in the Apocalypse.

[2] On the literary significance of this dependence on the Septuagint, see Swete, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

he followed the Septuagint,[1] sometimes even when that rendering is seriously defective. This fact brings out one broad difference between the exegesis of Paul's day and that of the present. No interpreter of that time seems to have thought it questionable to depend on a translation of the Old Testament, while at present no interpreter would have weight who did not go to the original sources. The historical sense was practically wanting in New Testament times. As one has said, scientific interpretation is as truly a human and modern science as astronomy or chemistry.[2] But we cannot demand of the New Testament writers that their exegesis should be in advance of their times. It is to be regarded as a product of the first century and estimated simply at its intrinsic worth.

One other general remark should be made in this place. The New Testament writers, with perhaps only one exception, were Jews, yet their exegesis was not just the same as that of their Jewish contemporaries who did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. The New Testament writers were not deeply influenced, as will appear in the course of this chapter, by Jesus' own method of using the Old Testament, but still their general point of view was radically changed by him. He was the fulfilment of the promise made to the

[1] Sanday, *International Critical Com. on Romans*, following Kautsch, counts some eighty-four O. T. quotations in Paul and regards seventy of these as taken directly from the Septuagint, or as differing from it in a very slight degree. Variations would be natural if he quoted from memory. Vollmer, *Die alttestamentlichen Citate bei Paulus*, p. 38 f., assumes that Paul made use of some sort of a collection of Scripture texts, and if he did this, his deviation from the Alexandrian version would be explained.

[2] Toy, *Quotations in the N. T.*, p. xxv.

fathers, and it was inevitable that his appearance should affect their reading of the Old Testament. They had also become charged with a practical religious spirit through their contact with Jesus, and it was natural that this gave to their interpretation of the Scriptures greater directness, sanity, and spirituality than belonged to contemporary Jewish interpretation. If, technically speaking, their method showed no advance upon that of their day, yet its practical use was so tempered and directed by the realities of the Christian revelation that they formed a group by themselves, practically far in advance of their most gifted Jewish contemporaries.

In attempting now to characterize New Testament interpretation, we begin with what is perhaps its most conspicuous feature, viz. its disregard of the original context and purpose of the various Old Testament passages with which it deals. This disregard was common to all who used the Scriptures both in the Jewish and the Christian Church. It went naturally with the ancient conception of an inspired writing, a conception that separated it from the life of those among whom it made its appearance. If a book is regarded as a collection of oracles, then the relation of its different utterances to each other and their meaning for those who first heard them can be quite neglected. And this was done in a large measure by New Testament writers.

Consider first the usage of Paul in this particular. In his argument that the call of the Gentiles into the kingdom of Christ was according to the divine purpose, he cited the words of Hosea which were spoken not concern-

ing the Gentiles, but concerning the Jews (Rom. 9:24–26). The language, taken apart from the context, is indeed quite applicable: "I will call that my people, which was not my people, And her beloved, that was not beloved"; but obviously the original context must be completely ignored to make the passage suit the argument of the apostle. Nor can we say that Israel at the time when Hosea wrote had turned from Jehovah, and was not better than the Gentiles. For Paul argues (Rom. 11:1) that, even in his own time, when the great majority of Israel had refused to hearken to the Gospel, they were still *God's people*. He had not cast them off. They were beloved for the fathers' sake, and called with a calling of which God did not repent (Rom. 11:28–29).

Again, in Rom. 10:6–8, Paul quotes and comments upon Deut. 30:12–13. The Deuteronomist, in illustrating the thought that God's commandment was not too hard for the people, said: "It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it that we may do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it that we may do it?" Here we have simply a figurative expression of the thought that the commandment is not impossible. But Paul, while retaining the thought of the nearness of the word, applies the passage to the Gospel. The ascent into heaven was to bring *Christ* down, not the Law; the descent into the abyss was to bring Christ up.

It is to be noticed that Paul substituted a descent

into the abyss for a going "beyond the sea," which the original has. It is true that in the Old Testament the sea is an "abyss,"[1] but the change from a journey across the sea to a going down *into* the sea must apparently be regarded as a free modification by Paul to suit the passage to Christ's descent into Hades (Eph. 4:9). Further, while the original in Deuteronomy contemplates the *doing* of the Law, Paul finds in it the contrasted thought of *faith*. Thus his use of the passage appears to be quite foreign to its primitive sense. It is plain that there was a certain parallelism between the situation of the ancient Jews in relation to the Law and that of the Jews in Paul's day in relation to Christ; but his language appears to affirm more than a mere parallelism.

Or consider Paul's use of Is. 45:23 in Rom. 14:11. The prophet represents God as calling all men to look unto him for salvation, and not unto idols. He solemnly affirms that every knee shall at length bow unto him, and every tongue shall swear, *i.e.* shall swear by him, and not by other gods. The apostle, however, uses the language in an entirely different sense. He quotes it in proof that all men shall give account of themselves unto God in the last judgment. It is transferred from this age and world to the coming age, and is made to teach not the conversion of men to God, but their final confession[2] to him of the deeds done in the flesh.[3]

[1] Toy, *Quotations in the N. T.*, p. 149.

[2] The Hebrew has "swear" (תִּשָּׁבַע). Whether Paul himself substituted "confess" (ἐξομολογήσεται), or followed an Aramaic version (the Septuagint has ὀμεῖται), it is not possible to say.

[3] Other passages in Paul illustrating his disregard for the context of the

If we turn now to the evangelists and the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find that they also were indifferent to the original purport of the passage that they quoted. They dealt with the *words* of the Old Testament rather than its ideas. This disregard of the historical meaning of Old Testament words is particularly striking in the application of various passages to Christ, especially by Matthew. Thus it is said that the infant Jesus was taken to Egypt and remained there till the death of Herod, that the word of Hosea might be fulfilled: "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Matt. 2:15). But Hosea was referring to a fact of the distant past, the calling of Israel out of the house of bondage. He made no allusion to the future. There was in his simple historical statement nothing to be "fulfilled." Moreover, the parallelism between Israel's departure out of Egypt and the incident recorded by Matthew is quite superficial and incidental. Jesus was delivered from the wrath of man by being taken *into* Egypt, while Israel was delivered from man's wrath by being called *out* of Egypt. The one single point of resemblance was geographical — both came out of Egypt.

Again, the evangelist evidently approved of the answer given to Herod by the scribes when they were asked where the Christ should be born. They said it should be in Bethlehem, and cited in proof a verse from the prophet Micah (Matt. 2:5–7). Now the essential point with Micah was that the coming Deliverer would be of the house of David. From his point of view, therefore, if *that* was

original are, *e.g.*, Rom. 1:17; 2:24; 10:19; 11:9–10; 1 Cor. 2:9; 14:21; 15:54.

realized, it made little or no difference where he was born. But the town of Bethlehem was naturally mentioned by the prophet, because that had once been David's home. Thus the scribes based their answer upon an unimportant detail of the prophecy.

A single further illustration may be added from Matthew. He says that Judas took back to the chief priests the money he had received for the betrayal of Jesus, and cast it into the sanctuary. Then the priests, since this was blood-money, declared that it might not be used for sacred purposes, and bought with it the potter's field as a burial-place for strangers. This, he says, was the fulfilment of the words of Jeremiah.[1] Now, according to the original, the prophet received thirty pieces of silver from unfaithful Israel as pay for the instruction he had given from God. This was appropriately cast back by the prophet into the treasury of the house of Jehovah, whose guardians thus lightly esteemed his word. The points of resemblance between the Judas incident and the scene in Zechariah are the number "thirty" and the word "potter."[2] The prophet does not mention the "potter's *field*," or say what *use* was made of the money. In one scene, it is God's own prophet who receives the money, and he casts it into the treasury out of proper regard for the dignity of God; in the other case, it is the betrayer of Jesus who receives the money, and he casts it into the treasury out of remorse. In Zechariah the money is represented as the shameful estimate of the value of Jehovah's instruction on the part

[1] The passage is found in Zech. 11:13.

[2] Marti, *Hand-Kommentar*, reads "treasure" instead of "potter."

of Israel; in Matthew it is the price of blood, the sum paid for the betrayal of a man who was supposed to be an enemy of God. It is difficult, in view of these facts, to think that the passage in Zechariah would have been used by the evangelist had it not been for resemblances between it and the Judas incident which seem to us now to be altogether superficial.

To the illustrations which have been given, a single one may be added from the Epistle to the Hebrews. The author of this cites from Is. 8 : 18. The verse reads as follows: "Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in Mount Zion." The "children" are the two sons of the prophet, Shear-jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Is. 7 : 3; 8 : 1). The author of Hebrews cites merely the *subject* of the sentence, the words "Behold, I and the children whom God hath given me." He quotes these words to show the oneness of Jesus and his followers, and on the basis of that to argue that he partook of flesh and blood (Heb. 2 : 13–14). It is impossible to discover any Messianic allusion in the original, or any reference to the disciples of Christ, or any foreshadowing of the relation between Christ and his followers, and least of all to discover any basis for an argument for the incarnation. Disregard of the historical connection and significance of Scripture could not well go to greater lengths than in this case.[1]

Yet, as has already been intimated, this feature of New Testament exegesis is not surprising. Paul and the

[1] Comp. Heb. 1 : 8–9; 2 : 6–8; 3 : 7–11.

other New Testament writers were "true children of their age, who thought and wrote in accordance with the standards and the point of view which were then recognized." The simple fact to be noted is that this feature of their exegesis would be surprising if reproduced in our day.

The interpretation of the Old Testament by the writers of the New is marked, in the second place, though in a less striking manner, by a tendency to depart from the primary meaning of the text and find its chief significance in a hidden sense. As compared with Philo's interpretation, the adherence of New Testament writers to the literal sense is most remarkable. It was also much more constant and close than that of the Palestinian rabbis or the early Church Fathers. Nevertheless, their exegesis was by no means free from a tendency to go behind the obvious meaning of the letter. Thus, *e.g.*, in the humane precept of the Law that an ox when treading out the corn should not be muzzled (Deut. 25:4), Paul found an argument that the Christian minister was entitled to support from those whom he served (1 Cor. 9:8–10). Indeed, he appears to have thought that this ancient precept was written *altogether* for the use to which he put it. At any rate, he saw in it another meaning than the primary and literal one.

Once, but once only, Paul confessedly allegorizes a passage of Old Testament history. Sarah and Hagar, the freewoman and the handmaid, are two "covenants"—one the covenant of works from Mt. Sinai, under which covenant were the Jews of his day who rejected Christ; the other the covenant of faith, under which were all who

accepted the Gospel. Paul did not reject the historical sense of this passage in Genesis, but found in it another also, of present and extensive import. This is, indeed, allegorical interpretation, the same in principle as that of Philo or that of the Greek philosophers, but it is characterized by naturalness and sobriety. It is suggestive as a historical comparison, but the apostle does not appear to me to give it as a *mere* comparison. It is rather as a part of the divinely purposed teaching of a certain historical incident.

Since Paul explained one historical event of the Old Testament allegorically, it seems likely that he admitted the possibility of applying the principle of allegory elsewhere; but the fact that his letters show no other unmistakable illustration obviously suggests either that he did not feel himself competent to unfold the allegorical meaning of Scripture, or, what is more probable, that he was better satisfied on the whole to give his readers the plain primary sense of the text.[1]

This going beneath the obvious sense of the Old Testament text after a hidden meaning is abundantly illustrated

[1] Cone, *Gospel Criticism and Historical Christianity*, p. 314, says that Paul "throughout his epistles treats the Old Testament allegorically and typologically." Vollmer, *Die alttestamentlichen Citate bei Paulus*, pp. 57, 69, in saying that Paul "appealed to a pneumatic sense of the text instead of the grammatical," and in the statement that Paul regarded the interpretation of Scripture as the result of a special *charism*, possessed only by the "perfect," appears to occupy about the same ground as Dr. Cone. This view appears to be extreme, as, in the opposite direction and in a lesser degree, that of Sanday, *Commentary on Romans*, pp. 302–307, who says that Paul almost invariably takes the literal meaning of Old Testament language.

in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Thus the reference in Genesis to Melchizedek, who appears suddenly for an hour in the history of Abraham and then disappears utterly, was regarded as mysteriously significant. It had been so regarded by the author of the 110th Psalm.[1] To the writer of Hebrews, the everlasting permanency of Melchizedek's priesthood followed from the fact that he has, in Scripture, "neither beginning of days nor end of life" (Heb. 7:3), and his appearance was regarded as predictive of Christ and of his eternal priesthood (Heb. 7:11, 15).

Again, the injunction to Moses to make the tabernacle and its furniture according to the "pattern" which had been shown to him in the mount was taken by the author of Hebrews as fraught with a most profound meaning (Heb. 8:5, 59). He found in it a doctrine similar to Plato's doctrine of ideas. It taught him that there is a heavenly tabernacle (Heb. 9:11), supplied with the various articles which were copied in the earthly house (Heb. 9:23), and into the holy place of this upper tabernacle Christ entered in a manner exactly corresponding to that of the high priest on earth when he entered in to make an offering for Israel (Heb. 9:12, 24). Out of the hidden sense of these two passages in Genesis and Exodus, the author of Hebrews drew the most characteristic part of his thought regarding the priesthood of Christ.[2] The Gospels and Catholic Epistles afford no

[1] Probably Maccabean, second century before Christ; Duhm and some other scholars regard it as addressed to Simon. The first four verses are an acrostic and give this name.

[2] Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 480, says that the writer of the Epistle everywhere assumes a spiritual meaning in the whole record

parallel to the allegorizing or spiritualizing of the Old Testament by Paul and the author of Hebrews.

Before passing to the last conspicuous feature of New Testament interpretation, brief reference may be made to a matter of subordinate importance, viz. the affinity with rabbinic exegesis in its use of Jewish tradition or legend. The most striking illustrations of this affinity are found in Paul. Thus the "rock" from which Israel had water in the wilderness is said to have *followed* them from place to place and to have been the Messiah (1 Cor. 10:4). The Law, Paul says in Galatians (3:19), was ordained through angels, and the magicians who withstood Moses were Jannes and Jambres (2 Tim. 3:8).[1] The significant thing is not that Paul's writings show traces of the influence of Jewish legend, but that these traces are so extremely few.

It was said at the outset that the New Testament writers as interpreters of the Old Testament were practically far in advance of their Jewish contemporaries by virtue of the religious influence of Jesus. They grasped its main purport. They ceased to put an undue estimate upon the Law (*e.g.* Gal. 4:9). They tested the Old Testament ethics by the new spirit within them.[2] In so far they proved themselves worthy disciples of Jesus. But

of the O. T. Of the quotations in Hebrews he says (p. 481) that "they are not brought forward in order to prove anything, but to indicate the correspondences which exist between the several stages of the divine purpose from age to age." But it seems obvious that the author saw much more than an historical illustration in Ex. 25:40.

[1] Comp. Acts 7:20, 22.

[2] See Drummond, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1894, p. 74.

in another department — the Messiahship of Jesus — their use of the Old Testament departed in a most striking manner from that of the Master, and it was *their* use, not his, which influenced the interpretation of the Church in subsequent centuries. He saw a foreshadowing of himself and his work; they saw predictions. The foreshadowing which he saw was general and spiritual in character; the predictions which they found were particular, and included minute external circumstances. His allusions to a Messianic element in the Old Testament never suggest the Messiah's preëxistence, and never tend toward a blending of the Messiah and Jehovah; but in their treatment of the Messianic element both these things are done. While, therefore, the New Testament writers agree with Jesus in regarding his revelation as a fulfilment of the Old Testament, their departure from his view of the Messianic element and his fulfilment of it is one of the most significant and least appreciated features of their interpretation of the Scriptures. To a brief illustration of this point we turn now in concluding the present chapter.

In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul gives us a glimpse into the character of his argument for Christ. "I delivered unto you," he says, "first of all that which also I received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3–4). We are not told in what passages of the Old Testament he found proof that Christ died for our sins and that he was raised on the third day,

but it is plain that he was in the habit of appealing to the Scripture in support of these points. We may well say that the first of these points is foreshadowed in the account of the "suffering servant" in Is. 53, but the second, a particular external circumstance, appears not to have even a clear *foreshadowing* in the Old Testament, not to say prediction. That the apostle went to the Old Testament for proof that Jesus was raised on the third day rather than to historical evidence of the fact, illustrates in a striking manner the importance which he attributed to the current method of demonstrating the Messiahship of Jesus.[1]

Again, the author of Hebrews in setting forth the superangelic dignity of Christ, ascribes to him certain words which in the Old Testament were addressed to Jehovah (Heb. 1 : 10; Ps. 102 : 25 f.). In this he departed from the Old Testament usage, where the name Jehovah is never given to the Messiah,[2] departed also from the usage of Jesus, who never referred to himself an Old Testament word which in the original concerned Jehovah.[3]

In Matthew and John this departure from the Messianic interpretation of Jesus is still more conspicuous than in Paul and the author of Hebrews. They speak of various things as done in the case of Jesus, or as done by him, *in order that* the Scripture might be fulfilled (*e.g.* Matt.

[1] See Gal. 3:13; Eph. 4:8–10 as further illustrations of the point in hand.

[2] This departure was made easier by the Greek translation of the Old Testament, where the Hebrew tetragram (יהוה) is rendered by κύριος.

[3] Comp. also Heb. 10:5–7.

2:15; 8:17; 21:5; John 19:28). Accordingly, they regarded certain words of Scripture as predictive, and believed that the circumstances of his life were divinely overruled to the end that these predictions might be fulfilled. And these circumstances included such details as the cry "I thirst" (John 19:28), the lance-thrust (John 19:37), and the distribution of the garments of Jesus (John 19:24), also the circumstance that his legs were not broken (John 19:36).

This conception of Messianic prophecy is obviously altogether unlike the conception that Jesus had. His fulfilment was from within, spiritual, and quite independent of the outward details of his career. What the evangelist regarded as fulfilment was something external and unspiritual. We may liken the demonstrative power of Jesus' fulfilment to the sun shining in its strength. This power is original, self-evidencing, and eternal. By the side of this, the demonstrative force of the kind of argument which was current among the disciples is a sort of will-of-the-wisp.

It is not strange, indeed, that they failed to rise to the high level of the thought of Jesus. Even the Church of later centuries has failed, though having fuller knowledge than they possessed. We are not concerned, however, to *explain* their departure from the Messianic interpretation of Jesus, but only to record it.

CHAPTER IV

SCRIPTURE INTERPRETATION FROM CLEMENT OF ROME TO IRENÆUS

A LETTER written in the name of the Church at Rome in reply to a request for counsel, written probably by the bishop of the Church about the year 100 A.D., may be taken, as far as it bears on the subject of interpretation at all, to reflect the views which were then current among the Christians of that city. It is more significant than a simple private epistle. The author of this letter (the so-called *First Epistle of Clement*) intimates that the interpretation of Scripture, by which he usually means the Old Testament, depends upon a divine gift of knowledge (γνῶσις. See 40, 41). He and his readers and all Christians are assumed to share in this gift, this ability to discover the will of the Lord for the Christian Church in the teaching of the Old Testament.[1] The method by which Christians come into the possession of this knowledge is not indicated. The Old Testament, according to Clement, is a *Christian* book by virtue of its *predictive* character, and also by virtue of the fact that Christ himself is thought of as speaking in it. The variety and extent of its predictive element seems to be almost unlimited. Even the harlot Rahab was a *prophetess*, fore-

[1] See Wrede, *Untersuchung zum 1 Clemensbrief*, p. 81.

telling by the scarlet thread from her window that redemption should flow through the blood of the Lord to all who believe and hope in God;[1] and Isaac in yielding himself as a sacrifice knew what was to come.[2]

Again, in the judgment of Clement, the offices of bishop and deacon were no new thing; for even Isaiah (60:17) had written concerning them.[3] It is plain from this passage, as from many others, that Clement read his Old Testament in the Greek translation, for the original does not refer to ecclesiastical offices in particular, and therefore has, of course, no suggestion of bishops and deacons.

Moreover, it seems probable that Clement modified his Greek text somewhat to suit his need, for even this has the word "rulers" (ἄρχοντας) instead of "deacons," that is, *servants*.

But the Old Testament was not only predictive of Christ and the Church; it was also, in the thought of Clement, which was indorsed by the Roman congregation, an utterance of Christ himself, at least in part. Thus he ascribes directly to Christ the words of the Psalm (22:6), "I am a worm and no man," and also the words, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me" (34:11). It was quite natural, therefore, in view of this supposed relation between Christ and the Old Testament, to cite Habakkuk in proof of the Lord's speedy coming rather than to cite words of Jesus recorded in the Gospels.[4]

[1] See 1 Clement, chapter 12.

[2] See chapter 31.

[3] See chapter 42.

[4] Clement cites words of Jesus only twice (chapters 13, 46), while he

In further illustration of the interpretative ability of the author and of the Roman Church of his day, or, we may better say, their abundant lack of the historical sense, it may be noticed that he regarded Ps. 3:5: "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; because thou art with me" (Septuagint rendering), as a proof of the doctrine of a resurrection; and at the same time he gave in full the fable of the phœnix as a valid support of the same belief.[1]

But though Clement's attitude toward the Old Testament was biassed by weighty presuppositions that rendered anything like accurate critical interpretation impossible, it is to be noticed that he was untouched by the mania to allegorize [2] the Scripture, and that he generally made a correct use of historical incidents. His defect

cites more than a *hundred* times from the Old Testament. The only New Testament book that he seems to have quoted directly is Hebrews (chapter 36).

[1] "Let us consider that wonderful sign which takes place in Eastern lands, that is, in Arabia and the countries round about. There is a certain bird which is called a phœnix. This is the only one of its kind, and lives five hundred years. And when the time of its dissolution draws near that it must die, it builds itself a nest of frankincense and myrrh and other spices, into which, when the time is fulfilled, it enters and dies. But as the flesh decays a certain kind of worm is produced, which, being nourished by the juices of the dead bird, brings forth feathers. Then, when it has acquired strength, it takes up that nest in which are the bones of its parent, and bearing these it passes from the land of Arabia into Egypt, to the city called Heliopolis. And in open day flying in the sight of all men, it places them on the altar of the Sun, and having done this, hastens back to its former abode. The priests then inspect the registers of dates and find that it has returned exactly as the five hundredth year was completed." (1 Clement, 25.)

[2] Wrede, *op. cit.*, p. 80, with a somewhat broad definition of allegory, finds illustrations of it in chapters 12 and 31.

was not that he emptied Old Testament history of its meaning by allegorical interpretations, but that he constantly read into it the ethical and religious views of his own time.

In the Church at Rome and perhaps contemporaneously with Clement lived Hermas,[1] author of *The Shepherd*, a work which we mention here in passing because of a certain negative value that it possesses. It has no formal quotations from the Bible, and naturally so, inasmuch as the author simply narrates what he saw and heard in his visions. Its value for our present purpose consists in the fact that, although it is full of dull allegories and prolix moralizings, it was exceedingly popular for two centuries and longer, was read in meetings for worship by the side of the Scriptures, and was thought to be inspired even by such men as Clement of Alexandria and Origen. We judge, then, that the standard of inspiration was notably different in those times from the standard at present.[2] What Clement of Alexandria and Origen regarded as a sacred writing would now be thought very commonplace, and to claim that it is inspired would seem to every one ridiculous.

From Rome we pass now to Alexandria, from the romance of Hermas to the general *Epistle* of *Barnabas*. This also may date from the closing years of the first century.[3] It is found with the New Testament in the

[1] Krüger, *History of Early Christian Literature*, gives as an approximate date for Hermas 100 A.D.

[2] Comp. Cruttwell, *Literary History of Early Christianity*, 1. 121.

[3] Harnack, *Altchristliche Literatur*, 2. 1. 416, assigns it to the period 80–130, more specifically to the close of this period.

Codex *Sinaiticus*, and was ranked as a sacred writing by the great teachers of Alexandria. Who its author was is unknown, but he claimed to be an interpreter of Scripture, and as such he had an influence which survived for centuries. Ability to interpret was regarded by him as a "gift," [1] a faculty of reading riddles. The Old Testament [2] was looked upon as a book of parables. Some of these, according to the author of Barnabas, it was impossible for the Jews, in Old Testament times, to understand, and others, he declares, would be unintelligible even to his Christian readers.[3] Therefore he did not unfold these passages to them.

It appears that the author of Barnabas, sometimes at least, quite set aside the meaning of the Old Testament text. An example of such treatment is his interpretation of the law concerning clean and unclean animals. He says that Moses intended to teach a purely spiritual doctrine, or rather three doctrines, but the people did not understand him. David, however, comprehended his meaning, as we see from the first Psalm, for the "ungodly" of whom he there speaks are the "fishes" forbidden to the Israelites in the law, the "sinners" correspond to the "swine" and other unclean animals, and the "scorners" are the "birds of prey." The author thinks that Moses legislated well, though he admits at the same time that it was not possible for the Jews to understand what his laws meant. Their true meaning, he held, was deep

[1] *Barnabas*, 1, 8.

[2] The author quotes but once from the New Testament, viz. in chapter 4.

[3] *Barnabas*, 9, 17.

down beneath the literal sense; it was a "mystery" and designed for the Christian Church. We will give two illustrations of these hidden mysteries. It will be noticed that in both cases the key to the mystery was borrowed from rabbinic exegesis. We read in Genesis that God finished his work in six days. This implies, says the author, that he will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is with him a thousand years (Ps. 90:4).[1] But the author seems to have regarded as his happiest piece of interpretation the solution of the mystery of the three letters; that is, the mystery of the number 318 which is found in the story of Abraham and Lot (Gen. 14:14). This "mystery," which, of course, has no existence whatever except in the imagination of the interpreter, is solved as follows: Ten is the numerical value of the Greek letter *iota*, and eight the value of the letter *ēta*. These two are the first letters of the name "Jesus" (Ιησους). Three hundred is the numerical value of the Greek letter *tau* (τ), which is the sign of the cross. And thus the author proved that Abraham, when he circumcised the 318[2] men of his household, did it with a thought of redemption by the cross of Jesus!

The author of Barnabas was the first Christian writer of whom we know who found in the Old Testament an elaborate typological element. That his types were purely fanciful, one need not read far to discover. Take one or

[1] *Ibid.*, 1.

[2] It is not said in Genesis that the number circumcised was 318. Indeed, it seems to be implied that there were *more* than 318. Comp. Gen. 14:14; 17:26–27.

two illustrations. The goat sent into the wilderness (Lev. 16:10) was a type of Christ, and for that reason one of a goodly aspect was chosen. The scarlet wool with which it was crowned pointed to the scarlet robe which was put on Jesus at his trial. The wool taken from the goat and put on a bush in the wilderness — this supposed to be a *prickly* bush from which one could not take the wool without suffering — was a type of Jesus set before the Church, and it taught that one who would have the kingdom of Jesus must be willing to suffer for it.[1] So again the red heifer (Num. 19:2) and the brazen serpent (Num. 21:8) were types of Jesus,[2] and the death on the cross was figured forth by Moses when his arms were stretched out during the battle with the Amalekites (Ex. 17:12).[3]

It need scarcely be pointed out that all this typological interpretation is quite foreign to the thought which Jesus had of the Old Testament; nevertheless the author of Barnabas was only the first of a large and distinguished company of Christian students who have found comfort in it.

One point remains to be considered. We occasionally find the author of Barnabas applying to the interpretation of Scripture a method which may be called the logical. Thus he derives from Is. 1:13 a proof for the duty of observing the Christian Sunday instead of the Jewish Sabbath. When God said to Israel, "Your new moons and your Sabbaths I cannot endure," that means, your *present* Sabbaths are not acceptable to me, and this lan-

[1] *Barnabas*, 7. [2] *Ibid.*, 8, 12. [3] *Ibid.*, 12.

guage is thought to imply clearly that God had *another* Sabbath in mind, even "the beginning of the eighth day," when he should have given rest to all things. This acceptable eighth day, the author holds, is obviously the Christian Sunday. But he missed, in the first place, the evident meaning of the prophet, who does not represent God as finding fault with his own institution of the day of rest, but only with a false observance of that day; and having missed this, he proceeded to draw out what he thought was involved in the criticism. His conclusion, however, is plainly illogical. For even if God had found fault with the Sabbath itself, the seventh day of the week, it would not follow that he desired the observance of the next day.

It may be remarked in conclusion that the citation of Scripture in Barnabas is very loose and inaccurate, a fact quite in contrast with what we find in the letter of the Roman Clement.

In the letter of Polycarp [1] to the Philippians, while it furnishes no specific material for the history of interpretation in the early part of the second century, we have the first Christian document which quotes almost exclusively from the New Testament, and that quotes at the same time in an apt and simple fashion. So to quote implies, indeed, a knowledge of the general purport of the Scripture quoted, and with reference to the source of the quotations it indicates that the author put the New Testament above the Old.

It is at just this point that the letters of Ignatius, who

[1] Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna, and died a martyr in 155 A.D.

is reputed to have been the second bishop of Antioch and to have suffered martyrdom in Rome under Trajan (98–117 A.D.), are of most interest for our subject. The author makes only the slightest direct use of Scripture, and offers perhaps only one independent interpretation, viz. that the blood of Jesus signifies incorruptible love and eternal life,[1] but he shows at least one quality of an interpreter; that is, a sense of historical development, for he recognizes the superiority of the Gospel to the Old Testament. "Jesus Christ," he says,[2] "is in the place of all that is ancient; his cross, and death, and resurrection, and the faith which is by him, are undefiled monuments of antiquity"; and again, "The Gospel has something transcendent, to wit, the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ."[3] If this truth, of which Ignatius showed at least some slight appreciation, had been clearly grasped by the leaders of the early centuries, the literature of interpretation and also the doctrines of the Church would have been very materially affected.

The second century apologists, especially Justin, Theophilus, and Athenagoras, are important in the history of interpretation because, in the first place, they brought into the Church the classical conception of inspiration. Thus Athenagoras describes the prophets as men who spoke in an ecstasy, being raised above the natural operation of their minds.[4] As a flute-player breathes into his

[1] *Epistle to the Romans*, 7; comp. John 6:51.
[2] *Epistle to the Philippians*, 9.
[3] *Ibid.*, 9.
[4] *Plea for the Christians*, 9.

flute, so, he says, the Spirit of God breathed into them. The figure is different in Justin, but the idea is the same, for he likens the prophet to a lyre and the Spirit to a *plectrum*.[1] Theophilus also speaks in the same manner, thinking of the inspiration of the prophets exactly as men thought of the inspiration of the Sibyl.[2] According to this conception of inspiration, the prophets themselves did not speak; it was the divine word,[3] or the Holy Spirit,[4] who spoke. The miracle is heightened by affirming that the prophets were illiterate.[5] If, then, they were the passive instruments of the Spirit of God, it was naturally as easy for them to speak of the creation of the world or of the consummation of all things as to speak of what lay near to them, of that which their eyes had seen and their hands had handled.

Again, the second century apologists affected the interpretation of Scripture in a vital manner by the introduction into the Old Testament of the doctrine of the *Logos*, which had already been applied to Jesus in the Prologue of the Gospel of John. Who first of Christians read the *Logos* into the Jewish Scriptures we do not know. Tatian, in his *Address to the Greeks*,[6] says: "We have been taught that the beginning is the power of the *Logos*, and that the *Logos* begat the world," and his language suggests that he traced the teaching farther back than to his master Justin. It is in Justin, however, that we first find it elaborated.[7]

[1] *Address to the Greeks*, 8. [2] *Ad Autol.*, 2. 9.
[3] See Justin, *First Apology*, 36; Theophilus, *Ad Autol.*, 2. 10.
[4] *Ad Autol.*, 2. 9. [5] *Ibid.*, 2. 35. [6] See chapter 5.
[7] See, *e.g.*, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 61.

Identifying "wisdom" with the *Logos*, he found in Proverbs (8:22–31) a clear declaration that the *Logos* was before all things, and that God had counselled with him from the beginning. It was to him that God spoke when he said, as we read in Genesis (1:26; 3:22), "Let *us* make man in our image," and again, "The man has become as one of *us*, to know good and evil." [1] When this identification was once made, the *Logos* or Christ was found throughout the entire Old Testament. Thus it was he to whom reference is made when the Scriptures speak of the "glory of God," the "Son," "Wisdom," "Angel," and not infrequently also when the title used is "God" or "Lord." [2] In short, when the Old Testament says that *God* manifested himself, this took place, according to Justin, through Christ or the *Logos*. Thus the Father recedes into the background.

This significant step in the history of interpretation was simply the application of Greek philosophy to the solution of the problem of the sacred writings in use among Christians. What Philo did from his Jewish point of view was done from the Christian point of view by Justin. It was a step to which a long development of thought among the Greeks naturally led the heirs of that thought, especially a converted philosopher like Justin. It was a step fraught with almost unlimited consequences which were to show themselves in the Scripture interpretation of subsequent centuries.

The second century apologists, it is to be noticed further, saw the heart of the Old Testament in its supposed

[1] See *Dialogue with Trypho*, 62. [2] *Dialogue*, 62.

predictive element. They not only found the *Logos* active in the Old Testament, but they also made the Old Testament largely a book whose authors had the historical Christ in view. Thus Justin says that it is the work of God to tell of a thing before it happens,[1] and he frequently speaks as though, in his judgment, the sole business of the prophets was to predict future events.[2] From the fulfilment of these predictions both Justin and Theophilus argued the divine character of the new religion. This was the line of evidence which they thought would be of the greatest weight with their readers. In this point they proceeded in harmony with the authors of the first and fourth Gospels, though they pushed the argument to greater extremes. The length to which Justin, for example, carried the predictive element in the Old Testament may be seen from such instances as the following: Two advents of Christ are predicted by Jacob (Gen. 49);[3] this patriarch, no less than the prophet Zechariah (9:9), foretold that Christ would enter Jerusalem riding on an ass;[4] and Ps. 24 predicts the ascension of Christ into heaven.[5]

It is not needful to dwell on the facts that this argument was based on a complete misunderstanding of the function of the Old Testament prophet, that it failed to take account of the multitude of points in the supposed predictions regarding Christ for which no fulfilment in his history was even claimed, and that it missed altogether the underlying spiritual reality.

[1] *First Apology*, 12. [2] See, *e.g.*, *Dialogue*, 7.
[3] *Ibid.*, 52. [4] *Ibid.*, 14, 53. [5] *Ibid.*, 36.

The writings of Justin, which exceed those of all other second century apologists which have come down to us, which make more use of Scripture than the others, and which had a paramount influence on the interpretation of the Bible by subsequent generations, furnish material for a yet further illustration of his exegesis. And first, as to its scholarly character. Although Justin had studied the system of the Stoics, the Pythagoreans, and the Platonists,[1] this study had not made him accurate as an interpreter, nor had it developed an historical sense in him. He speaks of Christ as having been predicted 2000, 3000, and even 5000 years before he came.[2] He thinks that the Jews had a lawgiver and king of their own up to the time of Christ, and that the Roman rule in Palestine began after Christ came.[3] He says that Moses took brass and made it into the figure of a serpent, and set it in the holy tabernacle.[4]

Again, the exegesis of Justin, like that of the author of Barnabas, spiritualizes the Old Testament. No Christian writer before him, whose works are extant, did so much in this direction. He did not set aside the literal sense of the text, as did Philo, but he often found in it a symbolical or allegorical meaning. If he did not descend to such trivial, cabalistic interpretations as some which we have in Barnabas, he yet was not behind the author of that writing in the arbitrariness which characterized much of his exegesis. Let the following instances be justifica-

[1] See *Dialogue*, 2.
[2] See *First Apology*, 31.
[3] *Ibid.*, 32; *Dialogue*, 52.
[4] *First Apology*, 60.

tion of this statement. The words of Jacob concerning Judah (Gen. 49:11) —

> "Binding his foal unto the vine,
> And his ass's colt unto the choice vine,
> He hath washed his garment in wine,
> And his vesture in the blood of grapes" —

are a prophetic allegory, and were fulfilled in Christ's entry into Jerusalem and in his passion.[1] The foal and colt were those which were brought to Christ as he was about to go into Jerusalem, and Justin says that this foal was bound to a vine — a detail not found in the Gospel. In another place,[2] Justin treats the foal and colt as symbols — the foal, which he assumes to have been *harnessed*, as a symbol of the Jews, and the colt as a symbol of the Gentiles. "Washing his garments in the blood of the grape" was predictive, says Justin, of the passion of Christ, the cleansing by his blood of those who believed in him.[3] When his blood is called "blood of the grape," that signifies that it was to be "of the power of God," for it is God, not man, who makes the blood of the vine. Thus Justin succeeded in reading into the old song of Jacob not only certain historical facts in the earthly career of Jesus, but also the doctrine of his incarnation.

Again, the roasting of the paschal lamb (Ex. 12:8) was, according to Justin, a symbol of Christ's suffering on the cross, for when a lamb was prepared for roasting, there were in it two spits in the form of a cross![4] The fine flour which

[1] *Ibid.*, 32.
[2] *Dialogue*, 53.
[3] *First Apology*, 32.
[4] See *Dialogue*, 40.

was used in purifying from leprosy (Lev. 14:10) was a type of the bread of the Eucharist, and the sacrifices which the prophet Malachi (1:11) declares shall be offered to Jehovah's name among the Gentiles, are nothing else than the bread and wine of the Supper.[1]

To these illustrations of an utterly fanciful and worthless exegesis may be added yet one more which brings out another aspect. The Septuagint rendering of Lam. 4:20 contains the unintelligible statement, "the breath before our face is the Lord Christ." Justin took this erroneous and obscure translation of the Hebrew and deduced from it a meaning quite as impossible as the translation itself. The passage alludes, he says, to the fact that there is a cross on man's face made by the nose.[2] But how the "breath" can be identified with the nose, and the nose be said to make a cross on the face, and how a possible cross in the structure of the human face can be identified with the Lord Christ or be thought to refer to him — these all are points which, one would suppose, ought to have seemed questionable even to an interpreter of the second century. We cannot imagine a writer of the New Testament, not excepting the author of Hebrews, as indulging in such fancies.

Irenæus, the Asiatic bishop of southern Gaul, who survived Justin some twenty-two years, marks in some respects an exegetical development beyond the apologists. We know his interpretation of Scripture only from his famous polemic against the Gnostics. It was doubtless determined in some measure by their views. The Gnostic

[1] *Dialogue*, 41. [2] *First Apology*, 55.

teachings, if Irenæus correctly represents them, were plainly refuted by him, but this was accomplished in the main by the use of reason. It was seldom necessary to go into their interpretation of Scripture in detail in order to show the absurdity of their views. Occasionally the Gnostic exegesis which Irenæus cites for the purpose of refuting it was right, and his attempts to overthrow it were unavailing. Thus he tried in vain to show that Paul in 2 Cor. 4:4 does not speak of Satan as "the god of this world,"[1] and again endeavors, without success, to prove that the "flesh and blood," which Paul says cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50), are not to be taken physically, but are to be interpreted as meaning men who have not the Spirit of God.[2] But apart from a very few exceptions of this sort, his use of Scripture appears to be overwhelmingly more forcible than theirs. His argument, for example, that the Old Testament and the New do not proclaim two different Gods, also that Jesus and Christ were not two different beings, as the Gnostics affirmed, is, in the main, valid. His general Scripture proof is sufficient. Thus, with reference to this practical end — the refutation of the false teaching of the Gnostics — the exegesis of Irenæus was adequate.

It is to be said, further, that Irenæus gives expression here and there in the course of his work to sound principles of interpretation. Thus, for example, he wants words taken in their natural sense and with attention to their context.[3] The heretics, he says, disregarded the order

[1] See *Against Heresies*, 3. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, 5. 9. 1.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1. 9. 4.

and connection of Scripture, and carried this so far that the result was as though one should take a beautiful image of a king, constructed by a skilful artist out of precious jewels, and by rearranging the jewels should make the form of a dog or of a fox, and should declare that to be the king.[1]

Again, he recognized the importance of steering one's course through the Bible by the clear and unambiguous teachings which it contains. The interpreter is not to appeal for light on hard questions to passages which may be explained in a different way by every one who approaches them.[2] When he speaks of characteristic teachings of Scripture, he appears to have in mind what he calls the rule of truth,[3] or the tradition received from the apostles.[4] Thus we understand how he can say at one time that the entire Scriptures can be clearly, unambiguously, and harmoniously understood by all,[5] and can speak elsewhere of the impossibility of explaining *all* that is in the Scriptures.[6] What all can understand is, in his thought, that there is one God, the Creator of all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of a virgin, crucified, and risen from the dead, who is to be the judge of men.

But though Irenæus wanted men to take the words of Scripture in their natural sense, it will be shown that he was far from doing this himself. He desired to have the order and connection of Scripture regarded, but often failed to regard them himself. And while there was an

[1] *Against Heresies*, 3. 12. 9.
[2] *Ibid.*, 2. 27. 1.
[3] *Ibid.*, 1. 22. 1.
[4] *Ibid.*, 2. 9. 1; 3. 2. 2; 3. 1–2; 4. 1.
[5] *Ibid.*, 2. 27. 2.
[6] *Ibid.*, 2. 28. 2–3.

element of truth in his claim for tradition, there was also a subtle error in it. To accept this tradition as a correct summary of Scripture teaching and vow loyalty to it was obviously to surrender in so far one's own right to search the Scriptures for one's self. It is probable that Irenæus did as much to hamper exegesis in subsequent centuries as the apologists had done by their theory of inspiration.

When we come to details of the exegesis of Irenæus, we find that he was virtually in line with Justin. Like him he found the Son implanted everywhere in the Old Testament.[1] Like him he regarded the Old Testament as full of minute predictions regarding Christ.[2] His freedom in ascribing a mystical and symbolical meaning to the text was not less than Justin's, as the following illustrations show. Thus the three spies whom Rahab hid with the stalks of flax upon her roof (Josh. 2 : 4) were types of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.[3] The fact that the stone which Daniel saw in his vision (2 : 34) was cut out of the mountain *without hands* indicated that Joseph was not the father of Jesus.[4] Balaam's ass was a type of the body of Jesus, upon whom all men, resting from their labors, are borne as in a chariot.[5]

Irenæus applied to the New Testament also this typological method of exegesis. Thus the magi offered Jesus *gold* because he was a king, *myrrh* because he was to die and be buried, and *frankincense* because he was God.[6]

[1] *Against Heresies*, 4. 26. 1.
[2] See, *e.g.*, *Against Heresies*, 4. 6; 3. 20. 4.
[3] *Ibid.*, 4. 20. 12.
[4] *Ibid.*, 3. 21. 7.
[5] See *Fragment*, 23.
[6] *Against Heresies*, 3. 9. 2.

The act of washing the disciples' feet meant that Jesus cleansed the disciples themselves from sin, and giving the disciples food when they were in a *recumbent* posture indicated that his mission on earth was to those who were spiritually dead.[1] In thus allegorizing New Testament history, Irenæus took a step which no one before him, except the Gnostics, had taken.

In conclusion, as illustrating Irenæus' style of reasoning as an interpreter, we advert to the fact that he argued from the four winds and the four faces of the cherubim that there must needs have been just four Gospels;[2] that Jesus could not have been the son of Joseph, for then he would not have been greater than Solomon, Jonah, and David;[3] and that when Jesus said that Moses wrote of him (John 5:46), this is the clearest indication that the writings of Moses are Christ's own words![4]

The course of interpretation from Clement of Rome to Irenæus, which we have now followed in some detail, may be briefly summarized. It reveals no tendencies which are not to be seen in New Testament writers, at least in germ. Its relationship to the Epistle to the Hebrews is closer than to any other canonical writing. The four great features which, though adumbrated in the New Testament, go far beyond it, are the doctrine of inspiration, the finding of the *Logos* throughout the Old Testament, the identification of the heart of the Old Testament with its supposed predictive element, and the spiritualization of the Scripture text. The most apt use of Scripture is found in

[1] *Against Heresies*, 4. 22. 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, 3. 11. 8.
[3] *Ibid.*, 3. 21. 8.
[4] *Ibid.*, 4. 2. 3.

Polycarp and Ignatius, and in these writers alone do we see the New Testament put above the Old. The feature of second century interpretation which departs farthest from the New Testament type is its arbitrary spiritualizing of the Old Testament, whether by finding in it types of Christ or by regarding it as mystical and allegorical in its nature.

CHAPTER V

THE ALEXANDRIAN TYPE OF EXEGESIS

THE "school of the faithful" in Alexandria, over which Clement and Origen presided at the close of the second century and in the earlier part of the third, may have been established some years before the death of Irenæus,[1] whose work as an interpreter was considered at the close of the last chapter. At this ancient seat of science and philosophy, we see the first systematic attempt to train men to be teachers and preachers of the new religion. The origin of the institution that undertook this work is lost among the shadows of the second century, but the school was flourishing when Eusebius wrote his history, that is, in the first quarter of the fourth century. The men who made this school famous had a greater influence in the Christian Church as philosophers than as interpreters of Scripture, and yet their influence in this latter department far exceeded that of any earlier interpreters. It is our purpose in this chapter to speak of the biblical work of Clement and Origen, and to follow the influence of their type of exegesis

[1] See Eusebius, *Church History*, 5. 10. 1–4. Krüger, *History of Early Christian Literature*, p. 160, speaks of this school as having existed long prior to 180, but that cannot be inferred from the indefinite language of Eusebius. Kihn, *Die Bedeutung der antiochenischen Schule*, p. 9, regards it as dating from the middle of the second century.

through the century and a half immediately subsequent to Origen's death.

Clement of Alexandria, like his favorite teacher Pantænus, whom he succeeded as head of the catechetical school, was a pagan philosopher before he became a Christian, and was probably a native of Athens.[1] Of his life before he came to Alexandria, and of the last ten years[2] subsequent to his departure from that city on the outbreak of persecution, we know almost nothing. Clement was a philosopher by training and choice. In him, says Harnack,[3] ecclesiastical Christianity reached the stage that Judaism had attained in Philo. It was as a philosopher, whose ideal of the Christian was that he should become "a perfect Gnostic,"[4] that he read and interpreted the Scriptures. His general conception of Christianity is given in these sentences from the *Stromata*. Philosophy, he says, was a schoolmaster to bring the Hellenic mind, as the Law the Hebrews, to Christ.[5] Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation for the Gospel; it paved the way that men might be perfected in Christ. "The way of truth is one," says Clement, "but into it, as into a perennial river, flow streams from all sides."

As an interpreter of Scripture, Clement stood on essentially the same ground as Philo; but in the application of a common method he showed better judgment than his great Jewish predecessor, and did not often go to such excesses in

[1] See Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, pp. 44–45.
[2] Clement died about 213 A.D. (Bigg), or before 216 (Zahn).
[3] *History of Dogma*, 2. 325.
[4] See *Stromata*, 6. 9–12.
[5] *Ibid.*, 1. 5.

his interpretation. He looked upon the Scriptures, even the New Testament, as a book of enigmas, and he held that allegory is the one key to this book.[1] It is said that Clement accepted allegorism as a part of ecclesiastical tradition, and it is plain that he gave it no such philosophical basis as did his pupil Origen;[2] and yet Clement's use of allegory differed not a little from any tradition with which we are acquainted. It is no longer incidental, as in Justin and Irenæus, but fundamental. Clement, in holding that Scripture has three[3] senses,—literal or historical, moral, and spiritual,—obviously held that, in order to be fully understood, it *must* be allegorized. Now this was a radical step in advance of the ecclesiastical tradition, and it gives to Clement's exegesis its one conspicuous feature.

It will be easy to show that the allegorizing of Clement was more recondite and elaborate than that of Justin. Take, *e.g.*, his treatment of the tabernacle and its furniture.[4] The four colors of the covering — blue, purple, scarlet, and white (Ex. 26:1)—suggest, he says, that the nature of the elements which these colors symbolize, contains the revelation of God. Again, the *position* of the various articles has great significance. The altar of incense placed in the Holy Place before the veil (Ex. 30:6) is a symbol of the earth in the middle of the universe. The

[1] *Stromata*, 5. 6. [2] See Bigg, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

[3] For the view that Clement found a fourfold sense in Scripture, and wrote in *Stromata*, 1. 28, τετραχῶς instead of τριχῶς, see Davidson, *Sacred Hermeneutics*, p. 79, and Bigg, *op. cit.*, p. 57, note. But the context is against this reading, as is also the fact that Clement's pupil, Origen, held a threefold sense.

[4] *Stromata*, 5. 6.

lamp is an enigma of Christ, and its position on the south of the altar shows the motions of the seven planets, which perform their revolutions toward the south. The ark signifies the properties of the world of thought, and the twelve stones in four rows are the signs of the zodiac in the four seasons. Another typical instance is this from the *Pædagogus*.[1] The prophet speaks of the coming deliverer as riding into Jerusalem upon an ass and a young colt (Zech. 9:9). It was not enough, says Clement, to have said "colt" alone, but he added to it also "young," to show the *youth* of humanity in Christ, and the eternity of simplicity which shall know no old age. Then with a personal application to his readers, he continues, "We who are little ones, being such colts, are reared up by our divine colt-tamer."

The allegorizing of Clement is not only more recondite and elaborate than that of any of his Christian predecessors; it also extends to the New Testament. Now while it may be said that the Platonic maxim, "Nothing is to be believed which is unworthy of God," lay at the root of allegorism as applied to the Old Testament,[2] the allegorizing of the New Testament cannot appeal to this maxim. Yet Clement allegorizes even here. In the fragment of a sermon on the *Lost Son*,[3] he speaks of the robe which was put on the returning prodigal as the robe of immortality, and says that it was given to him the moment he obtained baptism. Of the "shoes" he says that they are "buoyant, and ascending, and waft to heaven, and serve as such a

[1] *Pædagogus*, 1. 5.

[2] See Bigg, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

[3] See *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Coxe's edition, 2. 581–582.

ladder and chariot as he requires who has turned his mind toward the Father." The "calf" of the parable is Christ, well grown and to such size that he fills those who eat him.

Even the two fishes and five barley loaves with which Jesus once fed a multitude are allegorically explained by Clement. Taken together, they indicate the *preparatory* training of the Greeks and Jews, for barley is *sooner* ripe than wheat. The "fish" signify the philosophy that is produced in the midst of the Gentile billows.[1] It would be far easier to multiply illustrations of this sort than to find an instance of sober interpretation. But it is not necessary to dwell longer on Clement's method. The best that can be said of its application is that it was measurably controlled by the author's fidelity to certain fundamental Christian truths.

When Clement fled from Alexandria, his mantle as head of the catechetical school fell upon Origen, a native Alexandrian of Christian parentage, but of Coptic blood, who was then about eighteen years old. This position he held for twenty-eight years with only one brief interruption during the persecution under Caracalla. He spent this interval in Jerusalem and Cæsarea. When finally deposed from his office in Alexandria in 231 or 232 A.D.,[2] he continued his labors in Cæsarea, where he founded a biblical school. He died in Tyre in 254 A.D. as a result of tortures to which he had been subjected during the Decian persecution.

Origen achieved greatness not simply in the specific

[1] *Stromata*, 6. 11.

[2] See Krüger, *History of Early Christian Literature*, p. 176.

work of interpretation, but also as a text critic, and it is necessary to bear this fact in mind in order to explain such apparently conflicting statements regarding him as, *e.g.*, that he laid the foundations of scientific criticism of the Old and the New Testament, and also that he read his own ideas into whatever passage of Scripture he chose for interpretation;[1] or, that mediæval interpretation of Scripture was inspired by him,[2] and yet that he was the greatest teacher of the Church after the apostles (Jerome).

As an interpreter, Origen was a greater Clement; as a text critic, he was a pioneer. As an interpreter, he illustrated the Alexandrian type of exegesis most systematically and extensively; as a critic of the text, it is true of him that he introduced a new epoch. As an interpreter, he represents the culmination of a fatal method; as a critic of the text, he was qualified to be a valuable witness rather than a judge;[3] he called attention to new lines of investigation rather than laid sure foundations on which later workers might build. He produced a New Testament text which attained currency in his own time,[4] and in the *Hexapla*[5] he presented the materials for a comparison of the Hebrew text and the various Greek versions. This first attempt to establish the true text of Scripture in a documentary manner has long since perished.

While the qualifications of Origen for critical work doubtless surpassed, on the whole, those of any other

[1] See Harnack, *Ency. Brit.*, article "Origen."
[2] See Westcott, *Dict. of Christ. Biog.*, article "Origenes."
[3] See Westcott, *op. cit.*
[4] See Bigg, *op. cit.*, pp. 123–124; Krüger, *op. cit.*, p. 179.
[5] See Eusebius, *Church History*, 6. 16.

scholar of his century, it is plain that he was hampered by some serious deficiencies. Thus his knowledge of Hebrew was not thorough and independent,[1] his historical sense was little developed, and in critical power he was not the equal of his contemporary Africanus.[2]

As an interpreter, Origen was regarded by his pupils as inspired,[3] and subsequent generations have drawn largely from his writings. Yet it seems obvious that the salient features of this interpretation were dogmatic prepossession and allegory. The former is well seen in a statement from the *Commentary on John*[4] where it is said that the Gospels are the first-fruit of Scripture and John the first-fruit of the Gospel, because no other "plainly declared" the Godhead of Christ, "as John does."

Now, that the Gospels are the first-fruits of Scripture was a true Christian conclusion, for which he might have adduced ample grounds; but that John is the first-fruit of the Gospels on account of its plain declaration of the Godhead of Christ is a statement which savors not of the student of Scripture, but only of the theologian. When such a statement is made at the outset of a commentary, we know how the interpretation will fall out. Again, we have the same principle laid down in the Preface of the *De Principiis*, for Origen here declares that nothing is to be accepted as truth which differs in any respect from ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition. Since then *tradition*

[1] See Elliott, *Dict. of Christ. Biog.*, article "Hebrew Learning among the Fathers"; Bigg, *op. cit.*, pp. 125–126; Westcott, *op. cit.*

[2] See his *Letter to Origen regarding the History of Susanna.*

[3] See the *Panegyric* of Gregory Thaumaturgus.

[4] *Commentary on John*, 1. 6.

found Christ throughout the Old Testament, Origen did the same. His view of inspiration was also in essential harmony with that of tradition, as it appears in men like Justin. Inspiration, he held, extended to the whole of Scripture,[1] and was of such sort that the admission of a discrepancy in the Gospels [2] would require us to give up our trust in them.

A statement like that quoted above in reference to the preëminence of the Gospels seems to imply that Origen, in common with some of the rabbis, saw differing degrees of inspiration in different parts of Scripture,[3] but on this point one can speak only in a general way. He does not seem to have associated inspiration in an essential manner with the content of the sacred writings.

But the dogmatic bias in Origen as an interpreter was not by any means peculiar to him, nor more prominent than, for example, in Irenæus. Not so the completeness with which he set forth the method of allegory. In this particular, his work marked a distinct development. Like Clement he accepted the doctrine of a threefold sense in Scripture, but he established this doctrine out of Scripture itself,[4] viz., out of the Septuagint rendering of an uncertain Hebrew word in Prov. 8:20. In following the Septuagint without warrant from the Hebrew, in building a great superstructure on a text which even in Scripture is obscure, and in extending to *all* Scripture a word which obviously applied only to a part of the single book of Proverbs,

[1] *De Principiis*, 4. 1. 7. [2] *Commentary on John*, 10. 2.
[3] See Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 2. 348; Bigg, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
[4] *De Principiis*, 4. 1. 11.

Origen afforded in his proof of the threefold sense of Scripture an admirable illustration of the utter inconclusiveness of his reasoning.

Of the three meanings of "the divine letters," the historical sense, which is primarily for the edification of the simple, may be called the "body" of Scripture. Not all texts have this bodily sense, according to Origen, but the majority have.[1] Those who can see deeper than the historical sense are edified by the "soul" of Scripture; and those who are perfect perceive the spiritual law itself. They attain to the pneumatic sense. All Scripture has this spiritual meaning.[2]

Origen found confirmation of the doctrine of a threefold sense in the supposed constitution of man as a being consisting of body, soul, and spirit — a confirmation worth about as much as the verse in Proverbs. For even if it were established that man consists of body, soul, and spirit, one sees no reason for assuming that the historical sense of Scripture is designed for the redemption of man's body, its psychic sense for his soul, and its mystic meaning for his spirit. The supposed analogy is without force. It has no more connection with the thought of Scripture than has Origen's explanation of the water-jars which are mentioned in the story of the marriage at Cana. The expression "two or three firkins" is a dark intimation, says Origen, that the Jews were purified by the psychical and spiritual sense, sometimes also by the addition of the corporeal. Since, moreover, the world was made in six days, it was

[1] *De Principiis*, 4. 1. 19–20. [2] *Ibid.*, 4. 1. 20.

appropriate that there should be six jars for the water of purification.[1]

Origen appeals, in support of his doctrine, to the obvious irrationality of taking some statements of Scripture in a literal sense,[2] and notes that certain passages are treated allegorically or figuratively even by the sacred writers;[3] but the first of these facts is not an argument that Scripture has more than one sense, and as for the second, it of course does not suggest that any passage has more than *two* senses, and it would be quite unsafe to argue from it that *every passage* of Scripture has even two meanings, a historical and an allegorical.

It is plain that Origen as an interpreter found his chief satisfaction in drawing out the pneumatic sense of Scripture, and that his method of accomplishing this end was as arbitrary and worthless as was his doctrine that every Scripture *has* a pneumatic sense as distinguished from an historical and a moral sense. As an illustration of this statement, take the words of the Baptist in John 1:26:[4] "There standeth one among you whom ye know not." This statement scarcely seems to call for any comment, but as in many other cases the very simplicity of the text appears to have been to Origen evidence of an unusually deep meaning. These words, he says, indicate that Christ has "such virtue as to be invisible in his Deity, though present to every man and extending over the whole universe." The historical impossibility of attributing such a thought to the Baptist did not occur to Origen.

[1] *De Principiis*, 4. 1. 12.
[2] *Ibid.*, 4. 1. 16–18.
[3] *Ibid.*, 4. 1. 12.
[4] *Commentary on John*, 6. 15.

In the next verse of the same chapter of John we have another very simple statement, "The latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose." Origen sees strange mysteries in the "shoe." The author, he says, conveys, as in a riddle, that he is not fit to solve and to explain the argument about Christ's assuming a human body, an argument "tied up" and hidden from those who do not understand it. Then he dilates on the fact that only one shoe is mentioned in John, while in the other Gospel the plural is used. One shoe signifies Christ's taking human flesh, the other his descent into Hades.[1] The Baptist mentioned only one, because at the time he was in doubt whether Jesus was to enter Hades.[2] All this is as utterly fanciful as the exegesis of Philo. The difference between them as allegorists is that Philo was not bound as closely by a living tradition as was Origen. We know at the outset that while Origen's method of exegesis *allows* him to deduce from a text of Scripture some heretical doctrine of Valentinus or Basilides, the doctrine which he will actually bring forth will be consistent with the Catholic faith. But this is absolutely the only certainty that one can feel in regard to the result of Origen's study of a given Scripture text.

The Alexandrian type of exegesis which we have seen in Clement and Origen dominated the Western Church through the period of the great Theologians. It was thus vitally related to the doctrinal statements which have continued in force to the present day. It will be sufficient for our purpose to trace the Alexandrian influence on the great men who moulded ecclesiastical doctrine; but first

[1] *Commentary on John*, 6. 18. [2] *Ibid.*, 6. 21.

we may notice briefly the relation between Origen's work and some less distinguished Church leaders.

Of the immediate pupils of Origen, no one registered an advance on the exegetical method of their master. Dionysius, the greatest of them, allegorized even the vinegar, the sponge, and the hyssop which are mentioned in the account of the crucifixion.[1] The school which Origen founded at Cæsarea may have continued the better tendency in his biblical method, that is, the critical, and may have rejected allegorism,[2] or at least may have refused to give it prominence. And yet the great bishop of Cæsarea, Eusebius, who succeeded to this office between fifty and sixty years after the death of Origen, stands, as an interpreter, in general agreement with the Alexandrians, though the historical sense sometimes assumes greater practical importance in his sight than in that of Origen.

In Jerome [3] the critical element assumes as large proportions as in the work of Origen, and in this department his achievement was of the greatest influence, far surpassing that of the Alexandrian pioneer. He was the first to reject the tradition regarding the Septuagint translation, the first to go with adequate or at least respectable knowledge to the Hebrew original, the first to make a critical translation of the Bible, and the first to acquire a considerable archæological knowledge of the Scriptures. All these distinguished achievements suggest that Jerome is to be classed with the school of Antioch rather than with that of Alexandria, but

[1] See *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Coxe's edition, 6. 114 f.

[2] See Chase, *Chrysostom*, p. 4.

[3] Born 340–342 A.D. (Zöckler); died about 420 A.D.

these achievements do not show us the exegete. In this department he belongs, in the main, with Origen and the Alexandrians. Thus, for example, he declares that every sacrifice in Leviticus, every word that it contains, the description of Aaron's vestments, and all the regulations connected with the Levites, are symbols of things heavenly.[1] He sees mysteries in the figures of the book of Numbers and in the names of the camping-places.[2] Joshua's descriptions of boundaries mark out the realm of the heavenly Jerusalem; that is, of the Church.[3] The shipwreck of Jonah shows in a figure the passion of the Lord.[4] In every word of the Apocalypse manifold meanings lie hid.[5] If he did not accept Origen's threefold sense of Scripture, he yet distinguished *two* senses, which amounted to much the same thing. He aimed, says Zöckler,[6] to steer between the historical and the allegorical, as between Scylla and Charybdis. This may have been his *aim*, but it seems, nevertheless, to have been particularly easy for him to fall into the Charybdis of allegorizing.

About one hundred years after Origen fled from Alexandria, Athanasius became bishop of the Alexandrian Church. If Eusebius of Cæsarea was, as an interpreter, an Origenist with a leaning toward a more historical method, Athanasius was an Origenist with a leaning toward a more logical method. He was, indeed, a theologian rather than an exegete, but the dominance of his theology in some sections of the Church gives a special interest to his exegetical method, and especially as he was distinguished among early

[1] See *To Paulinus*, 8.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, 8.
[5] *Ibid.*, 9.
[6] *Hieronymus*, p. 370.

theologians for the constancy and variety of his appeal to the word of God. His view of inspiration was that of Origen, though perhaps somewhat more rigid. The Bible, he says, was spoken and written by God in such manner that it contains no disagreement whatever.[1] To admit a disagreement would be the same as admitting that the Father can lie. Fortunately for this presupposition, Athanasius was as deficient in the critical sense, as incapable of *seeing* the disagreements, as were the other early theologians. Athanasius saw no development of truth through the ages of biblical history, and no differences of doctrinal type. All parts of the Bible were equally good, in his judgment, as sources of proof-texts. As he lived a century later than Origen, during which time the Church had gone through a great conflict for its faith, we are not surprised to find that his exegesis was more conspicuously subordinated to the creed.

A few typical illustrations of Athanasian exegesis will support the statements just made about it. In his book *Against the Heathen*[2] Athanasius discusses Gen. 1:26, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." "Some one was with God," says Athanasius, "to whom he spoke when he made all things. Who then could it have been save his Word? For to whom could God be said to speak except his Word? Or who was with him when he made all created existences except his Wisdom, which says, when he was making the heaven and the earth, I was present with him?" Note the steps in this Athanasian exegesis. The Hebrew *suggests* that God, when about to

[1] *Festal Epistle*, 19. 3. [2] *Contra Gentes*, 46.

create man, made known his purpose to one or more other beings. Athanasius assumes that the passage refers to only *one* besides God, and then declares this one to have been the Word. "To whom *could* God be said to speak except to his Word?" Athanasius treats his interpretation as self-evident. However, he finds confirmation of his view in Prov. 8 by assuming that "wisdom" is the same as the Son of God.

In *The Incarnation of the Word*[1] Athanasius answers the question why the death of Jesus was a death on the *cross*, and this is his biblical argument. Jesus came to bear the curse which was laid on us, and how else could he have become a curse except by receiving the death set for a curse? That is the cross, as it is written, "Cursed is he that hangeth on a tree" (Deut. 21 : 23). But it is of course well known at present that the cross was not a Jewish mode of capital punishment, and hence was not contemplated in Deut. 21 : 23. Again, Athanasius says that if the Lord's death is the ransom of all, and by his death the middle wall of partition is broken down, and the calling of the nations is brought about, how would he have called us to him had he not been crucified? For it is only on the cross that a man dies with his hands spread out. Finally, he argues that a death on the cross, that is, in the air, was fitting in order that the Lord might clear the air of the malignity of the devil and of all kinds of demons.

It is quite obvious that all this exegesis is in the true Alexandrian line — mystical and wholly inconclusive. The same must be said of Athanasius' interpretation of

[1] *De Incarnatione*, 25.

Is. 6:3, which is found in the short treatise on Luke 10:22.[1] The words to be explained are those on the holiness of Jehovah by the seraphim in the temple. The word "holy," thrice repeated, proves, says Athanasius, that the three subsistences are perfect, just as in saying "Lord" they declare the one essence. Thus it is assumed that the triple repetition of the word "holy" has a mystical theological significance. It is also assumed that the particular mystery to which it points is that of the Christian Trinity. But further, the repetition of the word "holy" does not merely *suggest;* it *proves* that the three subsistences (*i.e.* for Athanasius, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) are perfect. And then, finally, the fact that the seraphim spoke the word "Lord" but once, after a threefold repetition of the word "holy," declares that these three subsistences are "one essence." Thus out of a simple poetical acknowledgment of the holiness of Jehovah there is spun the most abstruse of theological doctrines!

The masterpiece of Athanasian exegesis is the discussion of Prov. 8:22.[2] It is highly and variously characteristic of patristic exegesis that its great christological proof-text was taken from Proverbs. Athanasius does not raise the question who or what was meant by "wisdom" in this famous passage. He simply assumes, as others had long done, that it was the Word, Christ. After this assumption had been made, the way was plain and easy. The statement with which the passage began in the text of Athanasius was "*The Lord created me,*" but since it was a foregone conclusion that the passage concerned the Son,

[1] *In illud omnia,* 6. 6. [2] *Oratio,* 2. 44–72.

Athanasius declared that the word "create" meant to "beget." Such was the sovereign manner in which he removed obstacles! Now since Christ was begotten, — this is the main contention of the writer, — he was an offspring, but not, as the heretical Arians affirmed, a *creature*. But these illustrations must suffice for Athanasius.

There was one theologian of greater influence in the ancient Church than Athanasius, and whose writings have had far greater power in subsequent centuries, to wit, Augustin, bishop of Hippo, born just a hundred years after the death of Origen.

Augustin studied the Scriptures in a Latin translation. He had no knowledge of Hebrew,[1] and did not deem such knowledge necessary. The Greek translation of the Old Testament was for him as truly inspired as was the original itself. The translators were themselves prophets.[2] Their work differed somewhat from the original, he knew, but he regarded these differences as divinely suited to an edition of the Scriptures for the Gentiles.[3] For this reason he urged Jerome to translate from the Greek rather than from the Hebrew.[4]

Augustin, like Origen, found his chief pleasure in Bible study in the search after a hidden sense. He tells us in his *Confessions* that he heard Ambrose with delight as he argued from 2 Cor. 3:6 that we are to go back of the literal meaning of Scripture, and seek a spiritual sense.[5]

[1] *Civitas Dei*, 11. 5.
[2] *Ibid.*, 18. 43.
[3] *De doctrina Christiana*, 2. 15.
[4] *Epistola* lxxi. 2.
[5] *Confessions*, 6. 6.

He declares that he holds the strict truth of Bible history,[1] and he regards those persons as very daring who say that it is all to be understood allegorically;[2] but nevertheless he makes relatively little use of the literal meaning. His teaching is usually that which has been discovered by the allegorical method. The test by which he determines whether a passage is to be taken literally or is to be allegorized is practical: would the proposed interpretation tend to establish the reign of love?[3] If the literal meaning seems perverse, it is to be abandoned.[4]

Augustin held that a very large part of Scripture is to be understood both literally and figuratively. Nearly all the transactions of the Old Testament are to be taken both as histories and as allegories.[5] His chief interest, as has been said, lay in the allegorical interpretation, and this interpretation was fruitful largely in proportion to the initial difficulty in extracting any spiritual meaning whatsoever from a passage.[6] As with Origen, so with Augustin, the simpler a thing is, the more difficult he made it.[7]

All that has now been said of Augustin's method will be illustrated by the instances of interpretation which follow, and these will also serve to show what the Alexandrian type of exegesis could accomplish with the aid of great intellectual ability.

In Augustin's day some people made the account of

[1] *Civitas Dei*, 13. 21.
[2] *Ibid.*, 17. 3.
[3] *De doctrina Christiana*, 3. 23.
[4] *Confessions*, 6. 6.
[5] *De doctrina Christiana*, 3. 32; *De mendacio*, 36.
[6] *De doctrina Christiana*, 2. 7; *Contra Faustum*, 22. 94.
[7] Bigg, *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 132.

Eden wholly allegorical. This was distasteful to him. He declares that there was a real terrestrial paradise wherein were rivers and trees. But having affirmed this point, he continues as follows: "No one denies that paradise may signify the life of the blessed; its four rivers, the four virtues; its trees, all useful knowledge; its fruit, the customs of the godly; its tree of life, wisdom herself, the mother of all good; and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the experience of a broken commandment." But even this is not all that paradise means. These things, says Augustin, can also and more profitably be understood of the Church, so that they become prophetic foreshadowings of things to come. "Paradise is the Church; the four rivers are the four Gospels; the fruit trees are the saints, and the fruit their works; the tree of life is the Holy of Holies, Christ; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the will's free choice." And he concludes, "These and *similar* allegorical interpretations may be suitably put upon paradise without giving offence to any one." [1] Here we have an illustration of the extremely elastic nature of the allegorical principle. The four rivers of paradise may be taken to signify the four cardinal virtues, or the four Gospels; the tree of life as wisdom or as Christ, and so forth. Thus it appears that any passage of Scripture which is to be taken in a spiritual sense may have an almost unlimited number of meanings.

Another characteristic illustration of Augustin's interpretation is furnished by the ark. This is regarded as a figure of the city of God sojourning in this world, that is

[1] *Civitas Dei*, 13. 21.

to say, of the Church, which is rescued by the wood on which Christ hung. Its very dimensions represent the human body in which he came. For the length of the human body is six times its breadth and ten times its depth or thickness. Therefore the ark was made three hundred cubits long, fifty broad, and thirty high. The door in its side certainly signified the wound in the side of the crucified one, for by this those who come to him enter.[1] Augustin modestly concedes that another man might give a better exposition of the ark than his, but he is certain that, however its details are understood, it must be referred to the Church.

The writings of Augustin on the Psalms would fill a volume with allegories like those which have been cited. It is well worth noting that he gave relatively more attention to the *titles* of the Psalms than to the Psalms themselves, probably because the titles are so obscure, for he testifies that the more obscure the Scriptures are, the more wonderful are their secrets. According to this valuable principle, the titles as given in the Greek translation of the Psalms are far more attractive than they are in the original, for they are far more unintelligible. Let us notice a few instances of his treatment of these titles. The ninety-seventh Psalm, which in the Hebrew text has *no* superscription, had the following in Augustin's Bible: "A Psalm of David when his land was restored."[2] This restoration of David's land, says Augustin, is the resurrection of the flesh, for after Christ's resurrection, all those things which are sung in the Psalms were done. In the title of Ps. 8

[1] *Civitas Dei*, 15. 26. [2] *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, xcvii.

Augustin had the word "wine-presses," and he interpreted it as signifying "churches," because in them the good are separated from the bad, even as in the wine-presses the juice of the grape is separated from that which is thrown away.[1] The title of the seventy-third Psalm assigns it to Asaph, but Augustin discovers that this word means "synagogue," and accordingly, in an elaborate introduction, he endeavors to show that the Psalm is the voice of the synagogue.[2] But enough regarding his treatment of the titles.

Now as to the content of the Psalms. No Psalm wholly escapes allegorical interpretation. Even the twenty-third is an allegory. The speaker in it is the Church; the shepherd is Jesus. The water of refreshing is the water of baptism. Other details are similarly treated.[3] Psalm 8 was rather more fruitful in spiritual meaning than Ps. 23. Thus the reference to a "glory above the heaven" signifies the exaltation of Christ. The heavens which the psalmist says were the work of God's finger are interpreted as the Old Testament and the New. The moon is the Church, and the stars are individual local churches. "All sheep and oxen" are the holy souls both of men and angels. Thus runs his entire interpretation of the Psalm.

Augustin allegorized the New Testament as well as the Old, but of this treatment a single example must suffice. Jesus bade the Samaritan woman go and call her husband, and Augustin finds a hidden sense in the word "husband." What the woman was sent to call was her *understanding*. But if this is the meaning of husband, how about the *five* husbands whom the woman has already had? Augustin

[1] *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, viii. [2] *Ibid.*, lxxiii. [3] *Ibid.*, xxiii.

replies that these are possibly the five books of Moses, but more probably the reference is to the five senses. As these senses have ruled over her body, they are called "husbands."[1]

Again, to Augustin as to Philo, the numbers of Scripture were an inexhaustible mine of spiritual meaning. Knowledge of numbers he held to be among the essential things which an interpreter should possess.[2] It mattered not whether a number stood in a poem or in a plain historical statement; in any case it might yield a spiritual sense. Thus, *e.g.*, he saw a "great mystery" in the number of fish taken by the disciples, as recorded in the last chapter of John. Here is his solution of the mystery. Ten is the number of the Law, but since the Law must be aided by grace, that is, the Holy Spirit, and since the Spirit is denoted by the number seven, we add this to the number of the Law and get seventeen. Now if we add together the numbers from one to seventeen, we have the number of fish which the disciples took, namely, 153.

It is to be noted further that this number 153 contains the number 50 three times with a remainder of three, and thus it is seen to have a double reference to the mystery of the Trinity![3]

It may be said in concluding this statement on Augustin's interpretation that in him the tendency to read Christ into the Old Testament has its most striking illustration. Predictions of him are everywhere discovered, and discovered

[1] See *In Johan. Evang.*, Tractatum 15.
[2] *De doctrina Christiana*, 2. 25.
[3] *In Johan. Evang.*, Tractatum 122.

as easily in the mere numbers of some unimportant chronicle of remote times as in the deep longings of the great spiritual teachers of Israel. The genuine Messianic element in the Old Testament was thus buried out of sight in a vast sea of fictitious predictions. The simple history of the Old Testament was obscured or totally eclipsed by the "spiritual truth" which was juggled out of its letter, and development in the history of redemption was made impossible.

It is obvious that Augustin's view of prophecy is as certainly condemned by Jesus' conception of the Old Testament as it is by modern scholarship. For Jesus did not treat the Old Testament allegorically; Jesus did not divorce Messianic prophecy from Old Testament life; and Jesus did not make development in the history of redemption impossible by his view of prophecy.

A fact may here be cited which illustrates at once Augustin's method of finding Christ in the Old Testament and also his way of reasoning. It is this. In the titles of thirty-seven Psalms the Greek translation had the word "end" (τέλος) where the Hebrew as rendered by the American revisers has the words "chief musician." Now Augustin took this word "end" to mean Christ, on the ground that Paul calls Christ "the end of the law" (Rom. 10:4).[1] Therefore Augustin referred these thirty-seven Psalms directly to Christ. Some of them he regarded as addressed to Christ; in some he heard Christ speak, either in his own person (Ps. 22) or in that of the Church (Ps. 25), and in others he thought that the

[1] See *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, iv, vi, viii, ix, xi, etc.

psalmist spoke *about* Christ, though not addressing him (Ps. 19).

Such, then, was the exegesis of Augustin and such the Alexandrian type. The work of Augustin had, however, one great merit, its moral and spiritual *wholesomeness*. He might go to the extreme in torturing Scripture, and utterly destroy its historical sense, yet that which he brought forth, especially if it lay in the sphere of daily life rather than theology, was usually in line with truth. His practical Christian feeling and balance of judgment neutralized to some extent the errors of his method.

To what extent the dominance of the Alexandrian type of exegesis in the Western Church was due to the influence of the great writers of Alexandria, and to what extent it was the result of other forces, need not now be considered. That it was not *purely* an importation from the illustrious city on the Nile is sufficiently evidenced by Tertullian (died about 220 A.D.) and Hippolytus (236 A.D.), who, though contemporaries of Clement of Alexandria, interpreted the Scriptures in a thoroughly allegorical manner.[1] Neither, on the other hand, can it be doubted that the influence of Origen, who was acknowledged to be the master of allegorical interpretation, was a potent force in establishing the Alexandrian type in the Church of the West.

[1] See, *e.g.*, Tertullian, *Adversus Judaeos*, 10; *De anima*, 7. 43; *Contra Marcionem*, 4. 13; *De resurrectione carnis*, 13; Hippolytus, *Christ and Antichrist*, 6–13; Περὶ Παροιμιῶν, 30. 21–23.

CHAPTER VI

THE SYRIAN TYPE OF EXEGESIS

When Origen fled from Alexandria in the reign of Caracalla he went to Palestine, and at the request of Theoktistus, bishop of Cæsarea, and Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, expounded the Scriptures publicly for a season in Cæsarea.[1] Later, when he had been deposed from office in Alexandria, he made Cæsarea his home, and laboring as a teacher attracted pupils not only from Palestine but also from other lands. Among the latter class was the celebrated Gregory Thaumaturgus.[2] Pamphilus, a presbyter of Cæsarea who died in 309 A.D.,[3] and who may therefore have sat at the feet of Origen, founded an exegetical library in Cæsarea in which the *Hexapla* and other works of Origen were preserved.

This school at Cæsarea, the earliest Syrian Bible school of which we know,[4] may have perpetuated the critical spirit of Origen, in which case it was a true forerunner of the more famous school of Antioch.[5]

[1] See Eusebius, *Church History*, 6. 19. 16–17. [2] *Ibid.*, 6. 30.

[3] Harnack, *Altchristliche Literatur*, 1. 2. 543.

[4] Kihn, *Bedeutung der antioch. Schule*, p. 10, says, on the authority of Moehler, that Clement of Alexandria founded a school at Jerusalem in 209 A.D.

[5] Lucian studied in the school at Cæsarea. See Kihn, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

Of the origin of this school at Antioch no definite information has been preserved. Dorotheus, a presbyter of Antioch, who, Eusebius tells us, was devoted to the study of Hebrew and able to read it with facility,[1] and Lucian, famed for his sacred learning,[2] who also was a presbyter at Antioch, though born at Samosata and educated in Scripture at Edessa, were influential teachers, and are perhaps to be regarded as the founders of the Antiochian school or method.[3] The work of Lucian of which the influence survived longest was his recension of the text of the New Testament and of the Septuagint. Jerome says that in his day certain copies of the Scripture (*i.e.*, apparently, of the Septuagint) bore Lucian's name. Of his pupils the most famous were Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia.

Greater than the name of Lucian was that of Diodore, who was a presbyter in Antioch and after 378 A.D. bishop of Tarsus. Jerome says that he enjoyed a great reputation while still a presbyter,[4] and Basil in acknowledging the loan of two of Diodore's own works, commends the ability of both, and says that he has retained one for the

[1] *Church History*, 7. 32. 2.

[2] Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 77; Eusebius, *Church History*, 9. 6.

[3] Lucian died in 312 A.D. Dorotheus flourished 280–300 A.D. See Harnack, *op. cit.*, 1. 2. 532. Suidas, quoted in Harnack, *op. cit.*, 1. 2. 528, ascribes the origin of the school to Lucian. Kihn, *op. cit.*, regards Theophilus, bishop of Antioch (168 A.D.), Serapion, successor of Theophilus (190 A.D.), and Malchion, a presbyter, as forerunners of the school. The exegesis of Basil the Great of Cappadocia, who went to the extreme of literalness and rarely allegorized, shows that some features of the Antiochian method at least were found in writers of the Eastern Church who had *not* felt the influence of Antioch. Basil was educated at Athens.

[4] *De viris illustribus*, 119.

purpose of transcribing it.[1] Diodore is said to have written commentaries on the Epistles[2] and to have written a treatise on principles of interpretation,[3] the first work of the sort by a Christian scholar; but probably his greatest monument was his two famous pupils, Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom. In the works of these men we become acquainted with the best that was accomplished by the West Syrian school of Bible study.

Of the East Syrian school, with centres at Edessa and Nisibis, the most illustrious son, Ephrem,[4] was a poet rather than a biblical critic, and though his influence on the Eastern Church may have exceeded that of any other scholar of his century, his significance for the history of interpretation is not great. There were differences between the western and the eastern Syrian interpreters, the latter, *e.g.*, being more largely controlled by sentiment and the former by reason; but they were one in opposition to the allegorization of Scripture which prevailed at Alexandria.[5]

We turn now to the chief representatives of the West Syrian school, Theodore and John. Both were natives of Antioch and Greek in race. John was born about 347 A.D. and Theodore about 350 A.D. Theodore was ordained as a presbyter in Antioch in 383 A.D., was made bishop of

[1] See *Letters*, 135. [2] Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 119.

[3] The title in Suidas is *οτὶς διαφρὰ ἱστορίας καὶ ἀλληγορίας*. See Chase, *Chrysostom*, p. 10.

[4] See Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 115; Sozomen, *Church History*, 3. 16. Bardesanes and Harmonius, contemporaries of Lucian, attained eminence among the scholars of Edessa.

[5] See Dorner, *Christologie*, 2. 30–31.

Mopsuestia about 392 A.D., and died in 428 A.D. John became a presbyter in 386 A.D., bishop of Constantinople in 398 A.D., and died in exile in 407 A.D. Both had been pupils in the school of Libanius, a sophist, and on conversion both came under the influence of Diodore, the head of a monastery near Antioch.[1] Both were ascetic in their manner of life and remained unmarried. John was richly endowed as a preacher; Theodore as a critic and interpreter. The writings of John have been largely preserved; those of Theodore have largely perished.

The great significance of these men for the history of interpretation is that they went far toward a scientific method of exegesis. The commentary of Theodore on the minor epistles of Paul is the first and almost the last exegetical book produced in the ancient Church which will bear any comparison with modern commentaries. Chrysostom did not write commentaries, but much of the interpretation of Scripture in his homilies is sound and adequate.

Theodore and John had predecessors indeed in men like Diodore and Lucian, and in others no doubt whose names have not been preserved; but still their works are for the historical student essentially a new phenomenon. Exegesis has at last come down out of the clouds, and has planted its feet firmly on the earth. For the first time there is here a wholly serious and determined effort to find out what the sacred authors meant. For the first time, also, there is a resolute stand made against the ancient, univer-

[1] Both Theodore and John used the Septuagint in their Bible study, though the former, at least, had some knowledge of Hebrew. See Kihn, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

sal, and ecclesiastically sanctioned method of allegorical interpretation. The potential importance of this step was comparable with the act of Luther. The Syrian school did not maintain itself, and the waves of the old false method gradually buried it entirely out of sight and out of the memory of the Church; but nevertheless it contained the germ of a higher and purer knowledge of divine truth, and therefore the germ of a better Christianity and a better civilization than were attained in the next thousand years.

There were several important points in which Theodore and John, and the school which they represented, approximated a scientific method of treating the Bible. Of Theodore, at least, if not of John, it can be said that he was less hampered in his interpretation by the inherited view of inspiration than any scholar before him had been. He occasionally criticises the language of Paul,[1] and even denies that Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are divinely inspired.[2] He shows a freedom in discussing the canon both of the Old and the New Testament which is irreconcilable with the traditional mechanical theory of inspiration.[3] Chrysostom appears to have been less completely emancipated from the old view. For though he knows of something higher than the written word, namely, having God speak directly to the soul as he did to Noah and Abraham,[4] he yet uses the figure of the lyre in setting forth his conception of man's relation to the Spirit in the pro-

[1] See, *e.g.*, *Ad Galatas*, 16. [2] See Kihn, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

[3] According to Kihn, *op. cit.*, p. 91, he rejected from the Canon, Song of Songs, Job, the titles of the Psalms, and possibly also Chronicles.

[4] See *Homilies on Matthew*, 1.

duction of the sacred writings,[1] and seems to have held both to the inspiration of the Greek version of the Old Testament[2] and to the view which was shared by Origen that Ezra was divinely inspired to reproduce the Old Testament writings after they had been for the most part destroyed.[3] It is hardly possible then to think of Chrysostom as having reached a view of inspiration which was essentially less harmful to a true exegesis than was that of the Alexandrian school. It is, however, to be said that little stress is laid by him on the supernatural inspiration of the Scriptures. He continually urges men to read the Bible,[4] but evidently does so in the belief that the truth will commend itself to them as from God.

Again, Theodore and John may be said to have gone far toward a scientific method of exegesis inasmuch as they saw clearly the necessity of determining the original sense of Scripture in order to make any profitable use of the same. To have kept this end steadily in view was a great achievement. It made their work stand out in strong contrast by the side of that of the Alexandrian school. Their interpretation was extremely plain and simple as compared with that of Origen. They utterly rejected the allegorical method. Chrysostom does indeed occasionally use it, as when, *e.g.*, he explains the tombs in which the demoniacs hid as signifying the "resorts of harlots";[5] but in Theo-

[1] *Homilies on John*, 1. [2] *Homilies on Matthew*, 5.

[3] *Homilies on Hebrews*, 8.

[4] See Chase, *Chrysostom*, p. 151. "I do not understand the apostle (Paul) by reason of any intellectual ability or acuteness of my own, but because I keep continually in his company and love him much."

[5] *Homilies on Matthew*, 28.

dore I have found no single instance of allegorizing.[1] Thus their break with the characteristic principle of all Christian exegesis since Clement of Alexandria was practically clear-cut and complete. We find, especially in Theodore, a biting sarcasm poured upon those who allegorize the word of God, who say that "Adam is not Adam, nor paradise paradise, nor a serpent a serpent," and who call their folly "spiritual interpretation." [2]

There is yet one salient feature of Theodore's interpretation of the Old Testament that marks his affinity with modern scientific exegesis, and that is his view of prophecy. His break with ecclesiastical tradition at this point was radical. He did not read the New Testament into the Old. He did not find the Old Testament permeated with predictions of Christ and the Church, as did Origen, for example, or Augustin. His position approximated that of Jesus, though apparently without his knowledge of this fact. He saw a Messianic element in a very few Psalms, as, *e.g.*, the 110th, but the great majority of those which had long been referred to Christ he referred to various kings of Israel. He maintained that his view "secured for prophecy a historical basis, and magnified the Christian economy as that which converted into sober fact the highest imagery of the ancient Scriptures." [3] But this protest against a false view of prophecy, even as the Antiochene protest against the method of allegorical

[1] Theodore held that Paul's use of allegory in Galatians was merely an illustration. See Swete, *Dict. of Christ. Biog.*, article "Theodore of Mopsuestia."

[2] *Ad Galatas*, Swete's edition, pp. 73–75.

[3] Quoted by Swete, *Dict. of Christ. Biog.*

interpretation, was destined to be overwhelmed by the many advocates of the old view.

It remains to notice the shadows which lie across the brilliant record of Syrian interpretation. Chase in his admirable study of Chrysostom as an interpreter says that his "besetting sin" was perhaps his love of combining different interpretations,[1] thus leaving the hearer uncertain what a particular text meant, while his merits were common sense, vigor, and clearness. The weakest point in Theodore's work, according to Swete,[2] was his textual criticism. This editor bestows high praise on Theodore's genius and expository power.[3]

Now without questioning that the works of John and Theodore have the weaknesses which have been enumerated, I will mention what impresses me as the most serious defect in all their interpretation. It is their bondage to dogmatic presupposition.[4] It is a defect which they share indeed with their predecessors and their contemporaries, but this fact does not alter its character. It is more noticeable in them than in an Origen or an Augustin because of its sharp contrast with their grammatic-historical principle. One who sets out to discover an author's meaning is as much at fault if he approaches him with a dogmatic bias as he is if he allegorizes what his author says. Both Chrysostom and Theodore sacrificed their

[1] See *Chrysostom, A Study in the History of Bible Interpretation*, p. 193.

[2] Introduction to his edition of Theodore's *Commentary*, p. 70.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

[4] Chrysostom says that the apostles plainly did not hand down all their teaching in a written form but much of it orally, and that both forms are equally trustworthy. See Kihn, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

fundamental principle again and again, and read the ecclesiastical creed into the Old Testament and the New with the same ease with which it was done by Clement or Athanasius.

In the case of Chrysostom the following illustrations will establish what has been said. It was Christ, he declares, who gave the laws of the Old Testament.[1] He simply assumes this as self-evident. Again, he takes for granted that the title "Son of God" is to be understood metaphysically. He does not investigate its meaning as used by Jesus or by New Testament writers.[2] Had he not accepted the traditional view as unquestionable, he would hardly have argued as he does from Matt. 16:16–17. The similarity between the words of Peter to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and the words of Jesus to Peter, "Thou art Simon, son of Jonas," shows, says Chrysostom, that Jesus "is so Son of God as the other son of Jonas."[3] Had Chrysostom been capable of divesting himself of the inherited beliefs, and capable of estimating christological texts as impartially as he did many others, he would have recognized that this basis was altogether inadequate for the support of his great conclusion.

Once more, it is the traditionalist and not the scholar who sees a sign of the Godhead of Jesus in his forgiveness of sins,[4] who takes the frankincense and myrrh of the magi as evidence that they regarded Jesus as God,[5] and who

[1] See *Homilies on Matthew*, 16. 7; 29. 3; 82. 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, 41.
[3] *Ibid.*, 54.
[4] *Ibid.*, 29. 2.
[5] *Ibid.*, 8. 2.

assumes that the same doctrine is established by the fact that Jesus told the secrets of men.[1] In like manner, in another place, he argues from the words "who is in the bosom of the Father" that Jesus must be of the same essence.[2] The Father, he says, would not have in his bosom one of another essence.

These illustrations might be increased to a great number. Whatever freedom Chrysostom may show in other fields, when he comes to Scriptures concerning Christ, he is bound hand and foot by the theology of the Church.

If Chrysostom sacrificed his fundamental principle under the influence of dogmatic presupposition, so also did Theodore, though the latter, as we have seen, showed a good deal of freedom in dealing with the Messianic element in the Old Testament. Speaking of Phil. 2:7: "Who being in the form of God," Theodore adds this comment: "That is to say, Lord and Ruler and Author of the universe, for all these things which have been named truly appear to follow the name of God."[3] But this is rather an expression of the Church's belief regarding Christ than an elucidation of the words of Paul. A little later, when speaking of the words, "Wherefore also God highly exalted him," Theodore says he does not know that any one can be found so foolish as to think that the *Word of God* was exalted after the passion.[4] What was exalted then must have been the *humanity* of Christ.

[1] *Homilies on Matthew*, 41. 1. [2] *Homilies on John*, 15.

[3] "*Nuncupationem Dei subsequi videntur veraciter.*"

[4] Swete's edition of Theodore's *Commentary on the Minor Epistles of Paul*, 1. 222.

Thus Theodore explained the passage in Paul by the creed of the Church, just as Athanasius did. The historical student is lost in the theologian.

On the words that "every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord," Theodore's comment is this: "that all should adore him, and that all should confess that Jesus Christ is God (*Deum*)." But Paul said *dominus*, not *deus* (κύριος, not θεός). Theodore superimposes on the text the ecclesiastical doctrine of the person of Christ, though in so doing he clearly denies his fundamental principle of interpretation. Again, take his comment on Eph. 4 : 5–6: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." It is evident, says Theodore, that in saying "one Lord" (*unus dominus*) he does not deny the Lordship of the Father, and in saying "one God" (*unus Deus*) he does not deny the Godhead of the Son.[1] This conclusion was "evident" to Theodore simply because he read Paul's words in the light of the orthodox theology.

These illustrations, to which others need not be added, show that the Syrian type of exegesis was only partially historical in practice. The principles of the school were not consistently carried out. To this end it was probably necessary that the school should have been continued some generations, and that other men in the spirit and with the ability of John and Theodore should have built on their foundation and have popularized their method. This, however, was not to be. Instead of an advance and

[1] "Evidens est quoniam neque unus dominus dicens, ad interceptionem Patris dicit, neque unus Deus dicens, ad interceptionem Filii dicit."

a perfecting of the type, a decline set in with the next generation, for Theodoret, the ablest pupil of Theodore, was a much less consistent advocate of the historical method than his master.[1] The star of hope that had risen so auspiciously began to be darkened, and the Church was soon content to go the old way.

When we reach John of Damascus, the last of the Greek Fathers (born about 700 A.D.), all independence in the treatment of Scripture has disappeared. The interpretation of the great men of the past is now regarded as inspired and authoritative.[2] Where that is wanting, the tradition handed down from the apostles supplies the need of the Church.[3] The Bible has ceased to be a living book, warm and vital, instinct with human interests, and has become a mere congeries of texts which are useful to prove the current theology.

Of the Syrian type of exegesis the Western Church furnished no conspicuous example. The unknown author or authors of that commentary on the Epistles of Paul which, until the Reformation, was ascribed to Ambrose, though opposed to allegory[4] and in this respect at one

[1] Comp. Chase, *Chrysostom*, p. 21; Swete's edition of Theodore, Introduction, p. 78. Kihn, *op. cit.*, pp. 64, 65, 155, 190, puts Theodoret and even Polychronius *above* Theodore. This judgment, however, appears to have been due not so much to any exegetical defect in Theodore as to his freedom in setting aside traditional views.

[2] See John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 2. 11.

[3] *Ibid.*, 4. 16.

[4] They use it occasionally. See on 1 Cor. 13:2. According to Ezek. 28:13, the devil was once in paradise and learned celestial doctrines; for the "precious stones" there mentioned signify, according to 1 Cor. 3:12–15, mysteries of divine teaching.

with the Syrian scholars, were, however, so completely dominated by the traditional theology of the Church that their exegesis is at a wide remove from that of Theodore of Mopsuestia. This commentary has been characterized by the editor of Theodore's work on Paul's Epistles as "briefer and weightier" than that.[1] "Briefer" it certainly is, and "less discursive," but inasmuch as it approximates the grammatic-historical method far less closely than does Theodore, and inasmuch as it is always concerned to justify the doctrines of the Church, it is hardly possible to regard its explanations as "weightier" than those of the eastern bishop. Moreover, its brevity is not altogether to be commended. It often passes over points in the text which need explanation, as, *e.g.*, the important and difficult verses, Phil. 1:12–17 or Eph. 6:13–17, and in general all biographical and geographical references. It is relatively full on all passages which are or were imagined to be theological in character,[2] but is quite fragmentary on all other aspects of the text. It seldom investigates words, or takes notice of grammatical details. Its explanations are very often presented without grounds of support, as though thought to be self-evident.[3] It rarely refers to the views of other scholars, and rarely also to such Scriptures as might throw light on the passage under discussion. Its characteristic feature is its interpretation of doctrinal passages, especially those which concern Christ, and this

[1] Swete, *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. 78.

[2] In Theodore's commentary on Philippians about $\frac{1}{5}$ of the entire space is given to the passage 2:5–11, which passage amounts to only $\frac{1}{13}$ of the Epistle.

[3] See, *e.g.*, *Ad Rom.*, 3. 26; 8. 13; *Ad Ephes.*, 6. 11.

interpretation is most obviously not historical, but dogmatic. Thus, *e.g.*, when the author comes upon the double name "Jesus Christ," he affirms that it is employed to indicate that he is both God and Man.[1] He is so intent on emphasizing this idea, that in the explanation of a doubtful passage, as, *e.g.*, Rom. 9:5, he quite forgets to present both possible renderings. Moreover, the accepted Church doctrines are so sure in his thought that he finds their derivation from Scripture a matter altogether too easy. In this point his commentary is a conspicuous illustration of what we meet henceforth in the writings of the Church for a thousand years.

We conclude, then, that the Syrian type of exegesis found no sympathetic representative in the Western Church. The explanation of this sad fact may perhaps be found partly in the hold which Augustin had taken upon the thought of the Church, and partly in the domination of ecclesiasticism.

[1] *Ad Philippensios*, 1. 1; 2. 5; *Epistula 1 ad Tim.*, 4. 22.

CHAPTER VII

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IN THE MIDDLE AGES

From the death of Augustin to the birth of Wyclif was in round numbers nine hundred years. During this vast period one type of exegesis is found throughout the Church. As that type began to give place to another in Wyclif and the German mystics of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the survey of the present chapter will not include them, though they doubtless fall in the Middle Ages.

When the greatest of the Western Fathers passed away from earth (430), the Roman Empire had already been divided for a generation, with Constantinople the centre of the eastern part, and the long period of Gothic and Vandal invasion and erasion had begun.[1] Twenty-five years later (455) Rome was sacked, and in the next century the barbarian flood swept repeatedly over Spain, Italy, and North Africa. War and desolation characterized the Merovingian period (481–751) in western Europe, desolation and war characterized also the later Carlovingian period (752–994) in ever increasing measure. The Lombards in North Italy, the Angles and Saxons in Britain, filled the sixth and seventh centuries with blood-

[1] Gaul was desolated by the Goths in 407, and in the next year Rome was besieged.

shed and confusion. At the beginning of the eighth century the sword of Mohammed crossed the Strait of Gibraltar, and conquered Spain. Through this century and the ninth, the ruthless hordes of Northmen devastated the shores of Germany, the Netherlands, and France. Charlemagne on the continent and Alfred in England lighted up a brief period, and brought in by their wisdom and personal power a measure of order and security; but the decline of the house of Charlemagne was speedy and disastrous, while the century after Alfred saw England divided under his weaker successors, and at its close the land was harried and subjugated by the Danes. Then came the eleventh century with its Norman invasion, the twelfth and thirteenth with their crusades to the Holy Land, carrying off to eastern graves millions of the young men of Europe.

Thus the nine centuries with which we are now concerned were, when outwardly regarded, a period of war and tumult, of physical violence and conquest, of political narrowness and discord, a period unfavorable to any education save in the arts of ruling or killing one's fellow-men. Here and there in the general darkness, usually at wide intervals from each other, little candles of knowledge were kept burning. We know of a school that was maintained in the fifth and sixth centuries in a monastery on the little island of Lérins,[1] near Cannes, and in far-away Ireland there were monasteries in the sixth century where Greek and Latin classics were read,[2] whence men

[1] See J. B. Mullinger, *The Schools of Charles the Great*, p. 30.
[2] John Owen, *Evenings with the Skeptics*, 2. 243.

like Columban went forth to England and the continent.

In the seventh and eighth centuries the English monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow maintained an intellectual life of no mean order, as we see in the Venerable Bede, whom Green calls "the first great English scholar," and in the latter part of the eighth century the monastery of Fulda in Germany became an important centre of education. The annals of the monastery of Clugny, founded in the tenth century, are adorned with the name of Hildebrand, the greatest pope of the Middle Ages (1073–1085), and with that of Bernard, the sweetest singer of the period.[1]

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, among the monastic institutions where great leaders were trained, none were more famous than St. Victor near Paris and Clairvaux in southern France.

To the monastic institution, which was the most widely spread[2] and most persistent educational force in the period with which we are concerned, the State is to be added, especially as represented by Charlemagne, who as an educator still more than as a statesman deserved to be called, as he was by one of his contemporaries, "the lofty beacon of Europe." He sought education for him-

[1] Among the best known of Bernard's hymns is that which begins "Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt vigilemus," and the "Laus patriae coelestis," from which we have —

> "Jerusalem the golden,
> With milk and honey blest."

[2] There were some fifty monasteries in England in 1066 according to Cutts, *Parish Priests and their People in the Middle Ages in England*, p. 37.

self, and even in advanced years acquired the art of writing.[1] It was also one of his deepest desires to have his clergy and nobility educated. To this end he summoned Alcuin from England in 782 to be the head of his palace school, and his grandson, Charles the Bald, gave the same position in his household to Erigena, an Irish monk and the most eminent thinker of his century. King Alfred also knew the value of education, and by his translations laid the foundation of English prose literature.

Approaching now somewhat nearer to our subject, let us take a brief survey of the intellectual and moral condition of those who stood as teachers and exemplars of the Christian religion in the period which we are considering.

In the *Rule* of St. Benedict, which was most widely adopted in the mediæval monasteries, there was no place for independent study. The Bible was to be read, and with it, as a final explanation, the exposition of the Fathers.

Aversion to classic literature was early and general. Alcuin rejected Vergil as made up of "lying fables." [3] Knowledge of Greek nearly perished in the West from the sixth century, and the Latin style, formed according to late models and carelessly cultivated, was prevailingly bad. Gregory of Tours, who died at the close of the sixth century, bewailed the universal decay of letters in Gaul, and illustrated it in his own writings, *e.g.*, by confounding the accusative case with the ablative absolute. In the

[1] Gibbon, 5. 47; Emerton, *Mediæval Europe*, p. 436.
[2] For the text of the *Rule*, see Henderson, *Documents*, p. 266.
[3] Mullinger, *The Schools of Charles the Great*, p. 110.

early part of the eighth century Charles Martel gave Church offices to those of his soldiers who had distinguished themselves in war,[1] a fact that helps us to understand why it was thought necessary by the Council of Tours in 813 to recommend that *bishops* — nothing is said about the lower clergy — should read the Gospels and the Epistles of Paul.[2] At about the same time bishop Freculf of Germany wrote to Rabanus Maurus of Fulda that he had not found in his bishopric copies of the Old Testament or even of the New, still less commentaries on them.[3] It was ordered by bishop Atto in the tenth century that all presbyters, deacons, and subdeacons in his bishopric should commit the creed to memory on pain of suffering a forty days' abstinence from wine,[4] and we read in the *Itinerary* of Ratherius that in the same century very many of the clergy of Verona did not know the Apostles' Creed.[5] According to Pope Victor III, who succeeded Hildebrand, the clergy, almost without exception, bought and sold the gift of the Holy Spirit.[6] It is not probable that such men were very diligent in the study of Scripture, or earnest in the acquisition of any useful knowledge.[7]

At the Council of Cologne in 1250 it was decreed that

[1] Gieseler, *Kirchengeschichte*, 1. 2. 491. Hincmar of Rheims says Christianity was nearly destroyed in Germany, Belgium, and Gaul in the time of Charles.

[2] Fisher, *The Mediæval Empire*, 2. 485.

[3] For the text see Gieseler, *op. cit.*, 2. 1. 87.

[4] D'Achery, *Spicilegium*, p. 402.

[5] For the text see Gieseler, *op. cit.*, 2. 1. 264.

[6] Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, 5. 245.

[7] Fisher, *The Mediæval Empire*, 2. 86.

the clergy who could not read and also sing the ritual must employ suitable persons to perform these services for them.[1] The testimony of Roger Bacon written in the second half of this century is of great interest. He declares that the entire clergy were given to pride, luxury, and avarice. Where they congregated, as at Paris and Oxford, their vices and riotings were such that the laity were scandalized. Theological students were banished from Paris and France because of gross vices. And another statement of Bacon's which throws a strong light on the condition of the clergy in the thirteenth century is that thousands of mere boys from ten to twenty years of age were allowed to study theology, though they had received no adequate preliminary training.[2] Again, Bacon tells us that the Bible was degraded, being deliberately put below the *Sentences*. "One who reads the *Sentences* disputes and is held as a master; one who reads the text (*i.e.* the Bible) is not able to dispute—which is absurd."[3] But in connection with this terribly dark picture of the ignorance and baseness of the clergy in general, it is comforting to read in the same work of Bacon that he knew a humble student who had spent forty years in correcting the text of Scripture, and still more comforting to think of the heroic labors and great achievements of Bacon himself, though it is pathetic that he died wholly unappreciated.

The general state of the clergy seems to have grown even worse in the century following Bacon's death. Studies

[1] On the ignorance of the clergy in this period, the conclusions of a Church historian may be seen in Schaff, *Church History*, 4. 400, 608, 616.

[2] Bacon, *Opera quaedam hactenus inedita*, edited by Brewer, 1. 398.

[3] See *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, 28. 574.

declined in the monasteries, and men who could not even read were placed over churches, who henceforth spent their time in gaming, or feasting, or in yet worse ways.[1]

It is to be remembered that, although a large part of the most distinguished clergy were monks, the greater part of the monks were not clergy. The sketch we have given of the educational state of the clergy would not be altogether applicable to the generality of the monks. Church offices, indeed, might be filled with common soldiers by Charles Martel, and century after century they might be filled by the men who could pay their price; but life in a monastery was not a political reward or a prize obtained with money. Furthermore, the monk had more quiet than the prelate, and his whole environment was naturally more favorable to study. Yet the life of the monasteries, both intellectual and moral, seems not to have been, save for short intervals, on a much higher level than that of the secular clergy. No rule was able to keep the lust of power and wealth outside the walls of the monasteries. Again and again throughout the entire period which we are considering, it was necessary to reform the life of the monks and to rekindle the flame of learning. Books were more abundant in the monastic libraries than elsewhere, but that was largely because monks were the chief manufacturers of books. They could neglect them also, and they did. Classic knowledge perished within the monastery as well as outside, though somewhat later, and its revival in the sixteenth century did not proceed from the monastery.

[1] See Gieseler, *op. cit.*, 2. 3. 184.

After this preliminary survey of the period from Augustin to Wyclif, especially of the education of priests and monks, we come to the special subject of mediæval interpretation of the Bible. To appreciate and understand this, we must, of course, go to the sources. For the earlier centuries of our period these are few, for the later centuries very numerous.

Monte Cassino, where the *Rule* of Benedict was drawn up in the first half of the sixth century, has been not inappropriately styled "the Sinai of the Middle Ages." By nothing is the justice of the title better illustrated than by its utterance regarding interpretation. It looks upon the exposition of the Fathers as all-sufficient. How widely and deeply that conviction determined the Bible study of the Middle Ages, we shall have frequent opportunity to observe. The exegesis practised by the author of this influential ordinance is suggested by the fact that the psalmist's joyful cry, "Seven times in the day do I praise thee," was made the mathematical basis of the order of daily service, and further by this fact that the Pauline utterance, "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry *Abba* Father," was regarded as proving that the abbot of the monastery is Christ's representative, and is called by his name.[1]

Of the exegesis of the Church in the hundred years following the death of Benedict, we must judge from the writings of three men, all Romans by birth, all worthily filling high offices. These are Gregory, bishop of Tours

[1] See Benedict's *Rule*, 2 and 16. Article 4 has 72 quotations from Scripture.

(† 596), Isidore, bishop of Seville († 636), and Gregory the Pope († 604). Of the attitude of Gregory of Tours toward the Bible and his ability to interpret it, we have at least a suggestion in the fact that he wrote eight books on post-biblical miracles, a work on the miracles of the apostle Andrew, and a third on the passion of the "Seven Holy Sleepers." By virtue of these works we may well call him the founder of that most popular and influential branch of mediæval literature, the miracles of saints.[1] The quality of his biblical work may be briefly indicated from his treatise on the *titles* of the Psalms — a field which Augustin found very fruitful. Thus the title of Ps. 9 announces the advent of the Son of God, that of Ps. 65 announces his resurrection, and all those Psalms whose titles contain (in the Vulgate) the words *in finem* show the perfection of good works.[2]

Gregory the Great, like Gregory of Tours, was extremely credulous, and was more interested in the reports of miracles than in the close study of Scripture.[3] Bede tells us that he wrote a mystical interpretation of Job "with a wonderful system of exegesis" (*expositionis miranda ratione*), and this statement we can readily believe after reading his *Pastoral Rule*, which seeks to buttress sensi-

[1] Voragine's *Aurea Legenda* of the thirteenth century and Bolland's *Acta sanctorum* of the seventeenth, which contains some twenty-five thousand names, are the great repositories of this literature.

[2] See *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptorum Rerum Merovingicarum*, 1. 874.

[3] Gregory blamed St. Dizier of Vienne for teaching grammar. Guizot, *History of Civilization*, 2. 102. See also Mason, *The Mission of St. Augustine*, p. 63.

ble instructions with the most fanciful interpretation of Scripture.[1]

Isidore of Seville taught that the Bible is to be understood in three ways — according to the letter (*secundum literam*), figuratively (*secundum figuratam intelligentiam*), as Ezekiel and the Song of Solomon, and mystically (*mystica ratione*), as the ark, the tabernacle, and the temple.[2]

It was a century lacking a year from the death of Isidore to that of the Venerable Bede (about 735), whom a German writer calls the most learned man of the Occident of his time. It is quite certain that we have in his writings the best that was accomplished in his century in the interpretation of Scripture. Bede did not lay claim to any originality in his method of interpretation. If his notes were not culled from the Fathers, it was at least his aim to write nothing at variance with them.[3] Plummer gives a list of more than a hundred writers whom Bede quoted.[4] Some of his commentaries consist almost exclusively of excerpts from the Fathers.

Bede found a mystical sense in all Scripture, even in its most obviously historical portions, but his unfolding of this mystical sense was characterized by great sobriety.[5]

[1] See, *e.g.*, *Regula Pastoralis*, 1. 5. 11; 2. 11; 3. 39.

[2] D'Achery, *Spicilegium*, 1. 225.

[3] See Plummer, *Ven. Baedae Opera Historica*, p. x.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. l.

[5] At the same time, in Bede's case as in that of Philo, it is misleading to speak of "fixed laws" of interpretation when a mystical sense is assumed. Mystical interpretation has always been arbitrary. When we come to the number three, we may, according to Bede, see a reference to the Trinity; to heart, soul, and strength; to faith, hope, and charity; to

This was perhaps his chief merit. He made no advance upon the Fathers, but he used them and their method with good sense. The tone of Bede's exegesis, like that of all ancient interpretation, is magisterial. The meaning is declared, not deduced. Thus, for example, as to the personality of Jude, it is simply affirmed that he was the apostle whom Matthew and Mark call *Thaddæus*.[1] The twelve tribes of the Dispersion in Jas. 1:1 are said to be those Jews who were scattered at the death of Stephen.[2] The comment on the injunction, "Be not many teachers," is that James thereby removes from the office of the word those who had gone from Judea to Antioch, and who were teaching the Gentiles that unless they were circumcised, they could not be saved. These three instances illustrate not only the magisterial tone of Bede's exegesis, but also its very inadequate historical knowledge.

Bede, like the early Fathers, was apt to introduce the theological teaching of the Church at points where the text can be quite satisfactorily explained without it. Thus when commenting on the words "Our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4), he says: "Our only Master is our Lord Jesus Christ with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as our only Master is the Father with the Son and the Holy Spirit, as also our only Master is the Holy Spirit

almsgiving, prayer, and fasting; to resurrection on the third day; to the married, the continent, and the virgins, or to the three continents. See Plummer, as above, p. lix.

[1] See *In II Epistolam S. Petri*, Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 93.

[2] *Super divi Jacobi Epistolam*, Migne, vol. 93.

with the Father and the Son. Our only Master is the entire Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." And he goes on at considerable length setting forth this dogma of theology.

It is noteworthy that Bede emphatically rejected the ancient notion of inspiration. Speaking on 2 Pet. 1:21 he remarks that it is ridiculous to think that the prophets in declaring what the Spirit gave them were like pipes through which, by breathing, one makes sounds.

In the century and a half between the death of Bede and that of the greatest of the Irish monks, John Scotus Erigena (about 880), a period which included the reign of Charlemagne and nearly all of Alfred's, there lived a considerable number of men whose biblical work has come down to the present day. Alcuin, the first of these writers to be considered, went forth from the school of York over which a pupil of Bede had presided. His fundamental canon of Scripture interpretation was not different from Bede's. It was to teach what the Fathers had taught.[1] He spoke of Augustin as *beatissimus*, other Fathers as *beati*.[2] Like Bede he had some knowledge of Greek, and if we may judge from a letter to the Irish monks, he did not despise the knowledge of secular literature.[3] He appears to have regarded the mystical sense of Scripture as the most important, and dwelt with peculiar fondness

[1] Mullinger, *Schools of Charles the Great*, p. 89.

[2] D'Achery, *Spicilegium*, 1. 63.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1. 437. This letter is assigned to the period 792–804, and we may suppose that Alcuin's attitude toward classical literature was less severe than it had been at an earlier day.

on the significance of numbers. When he spoke on this subject, as in a letter to Arno, bishop of Salisbury, it was manifestly out of a full heart.[1] In a letter to a certain Daphnus, he wrote as follows regarding the sixty queens and eighty concubines of Solomon (Song of Sol. 6:8): "They are the rulers and guides of Holy Church. Those who work for love of Christ are sixty, those who follow earthly ambition are designated by the imperfect number eighty, and are called concubines."[2] In a letter to Gallicellulus he discussed the ground of numbers as used in the Bible. A passage from this letter will give a vivid idea of the way in which Alcuin handled Scripture. There were ten precepts of the law, he says in substance; in like manner Christ gave ten pounds to the preachers of each people. To the ten plagues of Egypt correspond the ten persecutions with which the Christian Church is crowned. On the tenth day of the month the paschal lamb was to be chosen; at the tenth hour Christ breathed out his life on the cross. Then as to the number nine. The archangel who fell from heaven was covered (adorned) with nine stones; and to this corresponds the fact that nine orders of angels remained in heaven. Passing eight and seven, we read that on the sixth day man was created out of the immaculate earth, and in the sixth age the Son of God was made man from the immaculate virgin. He sees a divine correspondence between the four rivers which flowed from the one fount of Paradise to water the earth and the four gospels that proceeded from the one fount, *i.e.*, Christ, to water dry souls that they may bloom with

[1] D'Achery, I. 388. [2] *Ibid.*, I. 200.

the flowers of virtue. Unto the two cherubim in the temple correspond the two parts of knowledge — one of which is to leave the devil, the other to love God.

Hardly less distinguished in his own time than Alcuin was his pupil, Rabanus, abbot of Fulda and later archbishop of Mainz. He revived the theory of a fourfold sense of Scripture held by Cassian in the fifth century. The four senses, says Rabanus, are the four daughters of wisdom. The historical sense is milk for babes, the allegorical sense is for those who are advancing in knowledge, the tropological is strong meat, and the anagogical is wine for those who despise earthly pleasures and whose affections are fixed on heaven.[1] If the historical sense of Scripture is "milk for babes," there is ground for the suspicion that Rabanus, like many other allegorical interpreters, greatly neglected that large and needy division of mankind. Rabanus does not make it clear how the tropological and the anagogical sense differ from the simple allegorical meaning. Here are specimens of what he meant by anagogical interpretation. The fringe of Christ's garment denotes the incarnation. The basket in which Moses was placed denotes the Virgin Mary. The "hook" in Job 41, with which it is suggested that Job might draw out leviathan, denotes Christ's humanity. The sea of glass before the throne of God signifies baptism, and the frogs mentioned by the psalmist are heretics.[2]

Rabanus found the sacraments of the Church and Christian teaching in the most unlikely sections of the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus the commentary on Esther,

[1] See Mullinger, *op. cit.*, p. 146. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 146–147.

which he sent to the Empress Judith (834), shows that book to be full of Christian truth. The spiritual sense of the books of Chronicles pertains to the grace of Christ, as he showed in an exposition dedicated to Ludwig (834–838), and in a letter to the same king Rabanus speaks of the acts of the biblical saints as having a mystical significance, also the places in which they lived, some of which he translated from Hebrew into Latin in order to bring out more clearly this mystical sense.[1] In a commentary on the Pentateuch which Rabanus prepared at the request of bishop Freculf, he says that nearly all the sacraments of the Church are figuratively expressed in Exodus, as, for example, the sanctification of the Spirit and the mystery of sacred prayers in what is said of holy ointment and incense. In the book of Joshua he saw the entire career of Jesus prefigured.[2] Thus we may say that if Alcuin took Augustin as his guide in the interpretation of Scripture, Rabanus was somewhat more influenced by Jerome. It is interesting to notice that in the dedication of his commentaries he is careful to say that he has plainly marked the additions which he, "out of his poverty," has made to the exposition of the Fathers.[3]

From the monastery at Fulda we turn for a moment to that of Corbey in North France, where Radbertus was abbot in the first half of the ninth century and Ratramnus

[1] D'Achery, *Spicilegium*, I. 473. [2] *Ibid.*, I. 401.

[3] Another resident at Fulda, William of Bamberg, says in his Introduction to Canticles, "I have added nothing of my own, but have compressed all I could find in the expositions of the Fathers." See Maitland, *The Dark Ages*, p. 218.

was a monk. They were the first mediæval writers to make the Lord's Supper a subject of controversy, and the former was the first conspicuous writer on the birth of the Virgin Mary. Radbertus had some knowledge of Hebrew, and refers in his writings to the various translations of the Old Testament into Greek. Here is a single specimen of his exegesis. The birth of Jesus was not according to the law of nature, for if it had been, then, according to Gen. 3:16, it would have partaken of the curse. But when the Holy Spirit came upon Mary, she was holier than the stars of heaven, and her bringing forth of Jesus cannot have been with sorrow, affliction, and suffering, which things were incidental to the curse.[1] It is hardly necessary now to point out that, while Genesis records a curse upon the serpent and upon the earth, it does not curse the woman, and also that holiness may coexist with suffering and sorrow.

Ratramnus argued that Jesus was miraculously born of a virgin from the words of Jer. 31:22: "Jehovah hath created a new thing in the earth; a woman shall encompass a man,"[2] and from the vision of Ezekiel where he speaks of a "door of the sanctuary" looking toward the east (43:1–2; 44:1).

Certain letters of the early part of the ninth century afford us interesting glimpses of the way in which the Bible was then interpreted.[3] Thus the Congregation of the

[1] D'Achery, *Spicilegium*, 1. 44.

[2] I have noticed somewhere in the *Diary* of Samuel Pepys that he heard a London clergyman use this passage in the same manner. This was some eight hundred years after the time of Ratramnus.

[3] See *Epistolae Karolini Aevi*, 3. 65, 93, 114, 153.

Mount of Olives in a letter to Pope Leo III in 809 adduce John 21:17 as Scripture proof that to Peter and his successors the Lord had given the *entire* world.[1] The same Leo in a letter to Charles I answers with quotations from *Jerome* three questions of interpretation which the emperor had submitted to him. Bishop Einhard, a pupil of Alcuin, in admonishing Lothair I, appealed to Deut. 21:21 in proof that a disobedient son should be stoned. This he regarded as a divine sentence of perpetual validity. Agobard, the archbishop of Lyons, in writing to his clergy and monks regarding Church rule, cited a large number of Scripture passages, about half of which are from the Song of Solomon and the Apocalypse. Such a fact throws a strong light on the lack of literary and historical appreciation of the Scriptures prevalent in that age.

We complete our survey of exegesis in the Carlovingian age with some remarks on the work of Erigena (*cir.* 833–880). The fact that his writings were anathematized by Honorius III and again by Gregory III, and the further fact that he was murdered by his own pupils in Oxford, suggest that there may have been an element of originality in him, and perhaps of heterodoxy; but this originality did not manifest itself in his method of interpretation. "It is not for us," he says in his great work, *De divisione naturae*,[2] "to pass judgment on the meaning of the holy fathers, but to receive them with pious and reverent feeling." This was the attitude characteristic of his predecessors for four

[1] Comp. Hildebrand's interpretation of Matt. 16:19 in Article 22 of the *Dictatus Papae*.

[2] See Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 122.

hundred years. Erigena's originality was in the department of philosophy, not in that of biblical interpretation. In this he was an extreme allegorist, not unlike Origen in the combination of speculative genius with disregard for the historical value of the Scriptures. Let us transport ourselves into Erigena's world of thought for a few moments by following his comments on some passages of John.

The Baptist said to the priests and Levites that he was not worthy to unloose the latchet of the Messiah's shoe (John 1 : 27). This shoe, says Erigena, signifies the flesh of the Word, which he had assumed from the Virgin. For as a shoe is made out of the skin of a dead animal, so the flesh of Christ was made mortal for our sakes.[1] The latchet of the shoe means "the investigable perplexities of the mysteries of the incarnation!"

Again, commenting on the two Bethanys implied in John 1 : 28, Erigena says that the Bethany *beyond* Jordan prefigures in a mystical manner human nature before it sinned, which was then a "house of obedience" — the meaning he gave to the word "Bethany." The Bethany near Jerusalem denotes the same nature freed through the incarnation of the Word and the streams of divine grace, which are at first distributed as it were into Judea through the sacrament of baptism. It was fit, therefore, that John should baptize *beyond* Jordan because he did not yet have that true baptism which delivers the entire human nature not only from original sin, but also from sins of individual origin.

We are told at the beginning of the fourth chapter

[1] Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 122.

of John that when Jesus left Judea it was necessary that he should pass through Samaria. This is explained as follows: Samaria is the natural law, and is established between Judea, which signified the law of the letter, and Galilee, which is a figure of the eternal divine laws. Since therefore Christ took the foundations of his Church from the law of the letter, it was necessary that he should pass through the nations which were placed under the law of nature. It was thus that the foremost scholar of his age dealt with simple geographical designations.

Again, Erigena says that the woman of Samaria denotes the Church that is gathered out of those nations which desire to drink of the fountain, *i.e.*, Christ, and her coming forth out of the city indicates that human nature naturally seeks the fountain of reason. This statement is highly interesting, not for any light it throws on the text, but only for that which it throws upon the interpreter himself. It suggests that he regarded Christianity as supremely *reasonable*, and that reason, not dogma, is the highest authority.

Yet one other passage. The lad with five loaves and two fishes (John 6:9) points mystically to Moses, who is not unfittingly called a little boy, because the law given by him led no one to the mature age of justice. The five loaves are the five books of Moses, and are not improperly called *barley* because carnal man fed upon them. The much grass where the five thousand men sat down signifies the letter of the law, which was manifested in symbols. The disciples are commanded to make the men *recline*, because teachers of truth, unless first they begin to instruct

their pupils in the simplicity of the letter, are not able to raise them to the heights of contemplation. The fragments of the barley loaves are the subtile and difficult understanding of the holy Scriptures and the visible sacraments.

But these specimens of Erigena's interpretation must suffice. He died almost on the threshold of the tenth century, ten years before the death of King Alfred. This century offers nothing significant to the student of biblical interpretation. As far as Bible study and Christian life are concerned, it was the darkest of the Dark Ages.[1] The eleventh century was more fruitful. The *Homilies of Ælfric*, archbishop of York, illustrate the exegesis which was then current in England. The biblical background in the *Homilies* is very often obscured by legends and a multitude of stories of strange or fantastic miracles. When that background is allowed to appear, the exposition frequently falls below the average of the Fathers and never rises above it. Here are a few illustrations of eleventh century exegesis from this collection of sermons which were prepared by the highest authority for the use of the clergy.

The eighth day after birth, on which a Jewish child was circumcised, betokened the eighth age of the world, in which we shall arise from the dead. The stone knife with which circumcision was accomplished betokened that stone of which the apostle said, "The rock was Christ."[2] When Jesus said that many from the east and

[1] Lecky (*op. cit.*, 2. 239) regards the seventh and eighth centuries as the darkest period of the Middle Ages. Oman, *The Dark Ages*, gives that prëeminence to the ninth century.

[2] *Homilies of Ælfric*, edited by Benjamin Thorpe, 1844, 1. 99.

the west should sit down with Abraham in the Kingdom of God, he signified by the east part those who should turn to God in their youth, and by the west part those who should turn when old.[1] The homily on the Lord's Prayer explains the "daily bread" as meaning three things,—sustenance of the body, sustenance of the soul, and the partaking of the "holy housel."[2] In the comment on the word of Jesus, that he would meet his disciples in Galilee, after he should have arisen from the dead, we are informed that Galilee signifies "passing over," so that the promise meant that he would meet them when he should have passed over from death to life. The incident of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on an ass is treated very much as it was by the Alexandrian allegorists. The two disciples who were sent for the ass are the teachers whom God sends to instruct mankind. They are two because a teacher should have learning and good works. The ass and its foal betoken the Jews and the Gentiles. The fact that they were tied signifies that all mankind are bound with sins. The garments spread upon the ass are works of righteousness, and the people who cast their garments under the feet of the ass are the martyrs who for Christ's sake give their bodies to torments.

From the *Homilies of Ælfric*, which represent the popular exegesis of the time, we pass to the most eminent theologian of the century, Anselm (1033–1109), archbishop of Canterbury, simply noting on the way a sample of the biblical interpretation of his master Lanfranc. In his *Elucidarium* he describes some of the many members

[1] *Homilies*, I. 81. [2] *Ibid.*, I. 265.

which constitute the one body of Christ. Prophets are the eyes of this body, the obedient are the ears, doctors, that is, doctors of theology, are the mouth, and expositors of Scripture are the teeth.[1] Anselm, the most distinguished pupil of Lanfranc, is described by one of his biographers as a man whom Aristotle would have worshipped.[2] The significance of this word will appear as we follow him for a little in his use of Scripture. For this purpose we will take his *Cur Deus Homo*.[3] We find Anselm's general view of Scripture in these words: "Christ originated the New Testament and approved the Old. Since Christ is true, no one can dissent from anything contained in these books."[4] The form of this utterance is logical, but the content is scarcely a half-truth. Christ did not *originate* the New Testament as Anselm used that word, nor did he wholly approve of the Old.

The method of Anselm's exegesis is indicated by the following passages from his most elaborate work. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that Christ learned

[1] See Hook, *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, 2. 102. Another bit of contemporary exegesis is afforded by a letter of John, abbot of Feschamps in Normandy, to the Empress Agnes, whose husband had recently died. From the account in Genesis that Eve was created out of a *single* rib of Adam, the abbot argued the propriety of maintaining the glorious excellence of *single* wedlock. See Maitland, *The Dark Ages*, p. 352.

[2] See Martin Rule, *The Life and Times of St. Anselm*, 1. 124.

[3] Weber, *History of Philosophy*, p. 204, neatly characterizes the relation of Scholasticism — of which Anselm was one of the most conspicuous exponents — to the dogma of the Church. Dogma, he says, affirms "Deus Homo," but Scholasticism asks "*Cur* Deus Homo?"

[4] *Cur Deus Homo*, 2. 22, edited by Sidney Norton Deane.

obedience from the things which he suffered (5 : 8). This is rather a hard saying for one who holds the orthodox Christology, and Anselm's treatment of it is notable. The word "learned" (*didicit*), he says, can be understood in two ways. We can say either that Christ *caused others to learn* obedience, or that *he* learned by *experiencing* what he had had an *understanding* of before.[1] It is evident that each of these interpretations quite sets aside the obvious meaning of the text. Again, note Anselm's treatment of the difficult passage in Philippians. Paul says that Jesus humbled himself, and then asserts, "Wherefore also God highly exalted him." Anselm comments thus: "It is not meant that he could not have attained his exaltation in any other way but by obedience unto death, nor is it meant that his exaltation was conferred on him only as a reward of his obedience; but the expression is used because he had agreed with the Father and the Holy Spirit that there was no other way to reveal to the world the height of his omnipotence except by his death." In the same connection Anselm explains a passage in the Gospel (Luke 2 : 52). Here is the text with the comment: "The Lord increased in wisdom and in favor with God; not that this was *really* the case, but he deported himself as if it were so." With what sovereign ease the difficulty of the text — difficult only for one whose doctrine of Christ is not drawn from the New Testament — is put out of the way!

I add yet another passage from Anselm for its value in presenting the almost infinite gulf between the scholastic

[1] *Cur Deus Homo*, 1. 9.

method of dealing with sacred persons and relations, and the method of the Bible. Anselm asks why the Son rather than the Father or the Spirit became incarnate.[1] "If one of the other persons had become incarnate," he says, "there would have been two sons in the Trinity — the Son before the incarnation and the Son by the incarnation. Likewise if the Father become incarnate, there will be two grandsons in the Trinity; for the Father by assuming humanity will be the grandson of the parents of the Virgin, and the Word, though having nothing to do with man, will yet be the grandson of the Virgin, since he will be the Son of her Son."

Whether Aristotle would have worshipped Anselm we perhaps cannot be quite sure, but it appears reasonably certain in view of such passages as the foregoing that one cannot look to Scholasticism as represented by Anselm for light on Scripture.

Fifty-one years after the death of Anselm appeared the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard († 1164), on which it is said that more than four thousand commentaries have been written and which dominated the theological schools for three centuries.[2] In this famous work the Fathers very largely take the place of Scripture. Thus, *e.g.*, the author's proof of the dogma that the Son is *always begotten*, is taken from the writings of Hilary.[3] The entire work, which professes to deal systematically with the Christian

[1] *Cur Deus Homo*, 2. 9.

[2] See Trench, *Mediæval Church History*, p. 272; and Lecky, *History of European Morals*, 2. 226.

[3] See *Libri Quatuor Sententiarum*, p. 528, in Migne's edition.

religion, has nothing on the subject of the Scriptures. They are not once mentioned as a topic which a theologian ought to consider. They are indeed occasionally cited in proof of doctrine, but the system of Lombard would not be really affected if these occasional references to the Bible were expunged. There is little in common between the Bible and Lombard's *Sentences* except names. The work begins with forty-eight chapters on the Trinity, but in all this the revelation of God in Jesus has no part. They afford no glimpse of the fatherhood of God. Their connection with Scripture is highly artificial. The same is true of the rest of the work — of its forty-four chapters on Creation and its forty chapters on the Incarnation. The pages are filled with the discussion of questions such as these: Were the angels created perfect or imperfect? Have all angels bodies? Did the Father beget the Son freely or of necessity? Can God make anything better than he makes it? Is it right to say that the divine nature was born of a virgin? Was it possible for God to have become incarnate in a woman?

Let us notice now a few specimens of Lombard's exegesis. In Is. 65:17 we read: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered nor come into mind." This text is interpreted as teaching that the redeemed when risen from the dead will not remember the evil deeds of their earthly life, but only the good deeds. Again, from Eph. 4:13, where Paul speaks of attaining unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, Lombard concludes that all the saints, whatever may have been their age at death, will each be

thirty years old in the resurrection, for that was the age of Christ when he died and rose.

The historical sense of Lombard may be judged from his treatment of baptism. Christian baptism, he says, was instituted when Christ was baptized in Jordan. For he was not baptized because he wished to be cleansed, since he was without sin, but he gave to the waters regenerating power by contact with his flesh, in order that those who should henceforth be immersed in the name of the Trinity might be purged from their sins.[1]

Lombard's *Commentary* on the Epistles of Paul is altogether in harmony with the sort of exegesis that we have in the *Sentences*. The index to this commentary is an index of mediæval theology. The real apostle to the Gentiles does not speak here. What one hears who puts one's ear to the book is the echo of an echo of a man who was originally misunderstood and forced to serve a system of theology which he had little part in creating.

But we need not judge the exegesis of the eleventh century scholastics by Lombard alone. He had contemporaries no less famous than himself. Among these was Abelard, whom Professor Emerton calls "the most attractive and brilliant figure in the whole scholastic period."[2] With a spirit akin to that of Erigena, who preceded him by three centuries, he dared to question the truth of the dogmas of the Church.[3] Herein lay his significance for the history of the interpretation of Scripture. But he did

[1] *Libri Quatuor Sententiarum*, p. 844.
[2] Emerton, *Mediæval Europe*, p. 453.
[3] Comp. Owen, *Evenings with the Skeptics*, 1. 262.

not proceed against ecclesiastical error from the standpoint of a better understood Bible: he proceeded against it as a philosopher. As an exegete he offers nothing new.[1] He is an advocate of the old threefold sense of Scripture,[2] and his exposition is seldom more than a reproduction of the Fathers.[3] He differed from the Church in regard to the person of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, but the establishment of his new view was by a use of the Bible no less untenable than that with which the older view was supposed to be justified. Thus, *e.g.*, his discussion of the Trinity, like that of Lombard, contains not the faintest idea of the revelation of God in Jesus.[4] He finds the doctrine of the Trinity "diligently expressed" at the beginning of Genesis — a fact that illustrates the unhistorical character of his exegesis. In his "moral" explanation of the story of creation he says that the primal confusion of heaven and earth denotes man, who consists of a higher and a lower substance, and in his "allegorical" interpretation of the same story he explains the six days as meaning the six ages, of infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth, age, and the period of decrepitude. In this interpretation the luminaries of the fourth day signify the light of the Prophets after the Law.[5]

Bernard of Clairvaux, the successful antagonist of

[1] It is difficult to take seriously the remark of Tholuck who said, after reading Abelard's *Commentary* on Romans, that he hesitated whether it would not be sufficient to republish it instead of writing another.

[2] See *Abaelardi Opera*, edited by Cousin, 2. 723.

[3] He appealed chiefly to Augustin and Jerome.

[4] See *Theologia Christiana* in Cousin's *Opera*, 2. 357 f.

[5] *Expositio in Hexaemeron*, Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 178.

Abelard, did not rise above him as an interpreter, though his letters show that he was wonderfully familiar with the letter of Scripture and often quoted it with great aptness and force.[1] He held that the teaching of the Pope could not possibly suffer defeat, for Jesus said to Peter: "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Like all the other exegetes of the period, Bernard was an allegorist. Thus, in his explanation, the hippopotamus that in Job (40:15–24) serves to illustrate the power of God denotes Satan. The swelling river at which he does not tremble is the human race, and the Jordan over which he is confident is the elect.

Bernard was an effective preacher, but how far his preaching was from being an interpretation of the Gospel is strikingly shown in the fact that its chief result was a crusade to recover the empty grave of Jesus.

Turning from Bernard, the ecclesiastic, to the German Hugo of St. Victor, we find essentially the same exegetical ability. If one is surprised and made expectant by the remark of Hugo in the Introduction to *Homilies on Ecclesiastes*, that he does not make much use of the allegorical sense because of the common abuse of it,[2] one soon discovers elsewhere in his numerous writings that he was an habitual and even extreme allegorist. The prophecy of Joel is allegorized throughout. The "garments" of which the prophet speaks in the words, "Rend your hearts

[1] See *The Life and Works of St. Bernard*, edited by Dom. John Mabillon, translated and edited with additional notes by Samuel J. Eales.

[2] See Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 175. 115. It is, however, to be said that Hugo sometimes abides by the natural sense of a passage, as Gen. 49, which every one for a thousand years had allegorized.

and not your garments" (2 : 13), denote the examples of the saints. When the prophet promises that God will give the former and the latter rain, the "former rain" denotes the eloquent words of Christ and his apostles, and the "latter rain" is the expositions of the spiritual fathers together with the canons and decrees. In the words, "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood" (2 : 31), the "sun" is Christ, and the "moon" is the Church. The sun was turned into darkness when Christ was fixed to the cross; the moon is turned to blood when the Church imitates the passion of Christ.

As an illustration of the critical value of Hugo's work, the fact may be mentioned that he treated as Scripture written in the time of Ahab a compilation of the eighth or ninth Christian century, which bears the name of *Abdias*.

This turgid stream of scholastic exegesis ran on through another century and a half, but we need not follow it farther than can be done in a few remarks on Bonaventura and Aquinas. Both these men were canonized, and the writings of the former were published by order of the Pope. Bonaventura's exegesis may be judged from two passages — one from a work on Daniel,[1] the other from a sermon.[2] The Ancient of Days in Dan. 7 : 9–10 is seen by the prophet seated on a throne. This attitude indicates, says Bonaventura, eternity and immutability. According to the Latin translation, the tenth verse reads: "A fiery and rapid stream proceeded from his face." This is said to

[1] *S. Bonaventurae opera omnia edita studio et cura PP. Collegii A.S. Bonaventura*, Tomus I.

[2] *Op. cit.*, T. 5, *De triplici testimoniae sanctissimae Trinitatis.*

mean the plenitude of love and the plenitude of virtue — plenitude of virtue in the Son, therefore the stream was "rapid"; plenitude of love in the Holy Spirit, and therefore the stream was "fiery." In the sermon referred to, the spiritual heaven is said to be threefold, corresponding to the material heaven. There is the supreme heaven, which is the divine nature, of which it is said in the Psalm, "His going forth is from the highest heaven (Ps. 19. 6)." Then there is the middle heaven, which is the assumed nature of Christ, concerning which the Psalm says, "The Lord's seat is in heaven (Ps. 11. 4)." This is also designated in Gen. 1: "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters." Finally, there is the lowest heaven, which is the present Church, of which it is frequently said in the Gospels, "The Kingdom of heaven is like" this or that.

So far Bonaventura. More famous still was Aquinas, who has been called the greatest and profoundest teacher of the Middle Ages. By two works is he chiefly known — the *Aurea Catena*,[1] a mosaic of quotations from twenty-three Latin and fifty-seven Greek writers in exposition of the four Gospels, and the *Summa Theologica*. The *Aurea Catena*[2] is a monument of astounding industry, the *Summa*[3] a monument of the subtlety of Aquinas. But neither of them, as regards its exegesis, shows originality or independence. By the *Catena*, Aquinas is simply shown to be the greatest of the compilers.[4] It is not likely

[1] The original title is *Expositio continua super quatuor Evangelistas.*

[2] I have used the edition of Nicolai, 1851.

[3] My quotations are from the edition of 1763, 16 vols.

[4] Exegetical collections in Greek had been made by five writers from

that he would have made the book had he not believed that the exposition of the Fathers was practically final. The stately *Summa* of Aquinas is more deeply influenced by Aristotle than by Christ, for its form is throughout due to the "philosopher," and as for its content, that is simply the theology of the mediæval Church. Take such a section as that on the love of God;[1] even this does not appeal in any manner to the revelation of divine love in Christ. Indeed, it does not refer to him at all except in one article, and then not as showing God's love. It quotes but three biblical books or authors and five non-biblical.

A single representative paragraph of the *Summa* will sufficiently indicate the strength and weakness of the exegesis of Aquinas. He raises the question whether the new law is contained in the old. Then, according to his custom, he adduces reasons, scriptural or otherwise, for the affirmative. He says first, that the new law consists in faith; that many things in the new law are to be believed which are not in the old, and that, therefore, the new law is not in the old. Second, we read in Matt. 5: "Break not one of these *least* commandments," the reference being to the old law. But if the commandments in the old law are "least," the commandments in the Gospel are greater. The greater, however, cannot be contained in the less, and therefore the new law is not contained in the old. But, on the contrary,—and now comes the Scripture proof that the new law *is* contained in the old,—we read in Ezek.

Procopius of Gaza to Euthemius Zigabenus, and in Latin there were at least seventeen such collections before Aquinas.

[1] See I. 204–211.

1:16 that the prophet saw a wheel within a wheel; that is, the New Testament was in the Old. Thus having given Scripture proof both for the affirmative and the negative of his proposition, he proceeds to his solution, which is that the New Testament is in the Old as a tree is in a seed — a very ancient but also very pernicious half-truth.[1]

In conclusion, we may cite as applicable to the exegesis of Aquinas what Windelband says of the later Scholasticism: "With its distinctions and conclusions it was carrying on to a certain extent a juggler's game in the open air, which indeed set the formal mental powers in beneficent motion, but which in spite of all its turns and windings could lead to no material knowledge." [2]

In passing rapidly to the conclusion of our survey of mediæval exegesis, we must note two of the noblest men of the entire period — Robert Grosseteste (bishop of Lincoln 1235–1253) and Roger Bacon (1214–1292). Both had a knowledge and appreciation of Greek and Hebrew far above that of their century.[3] Both were in advance of their times in the stress they laid on the study of the Bible.[4] But Bacon's advanced ideas regarding the value of Greek and Hebrew to an interpreter, which might have

[1] Archbishop Vaughan, in his *Life and Labors of St. Thomas Aquinas*, p. 398, gives the following example of the exegesis of Aquinas: "Note with regard to these words 'there shall come forth a rod' (Is. 11:1) that the Blessed Virgin is here called a rod." She is that, "first, as consoling in tribulations; secondly, as fructifying; thirdly, as satiating; fourthly, as scourging; and fifthly, as crushing!"

[2] Windelband, *A History of Philosophy*, p. 272.

[3] Comp. Döllinger, *Studies in European History*, p. 178.

[4] Bacon held that children should be carefully taught to read the Bible. See *Opus tertium*, p. 54, in the edition cited above.

wrought a beneficent change in Bible study, were unpublished for centuries, and Grosseteste, with all his independence, did not depart essentially from the ecclesiastical method of interpretation,[1] even as he shared the ecclesiastical superstition.[2] He went to the Old Testament for types of present ecclesiastical officers and relations. Adam and Eve he regarded as types of Christ and the Church. Moses was the typical prelate; Abel, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph were types of the bishop; and he used the Scriptures regarding these men to support his plans for the reformation of the clergy of his diocese in the thirteenth century.

Soon after the death of Bacon and shortly before the birth of Wyclif, Pope Boniface VIII issued the famous Bull *Unam Sanctam* (1302)[3] from which we will cite our final illustration of mediæval exegesis. This Bull seeks to prove from Scripture that the Church is one, and that out of it no salvation is possible. This is accomplished by three passages. The first is from the Song of Solomon (6:9):—

"My dove, my undefiled, is one." This is taken to

[1] Grosseteste regarded Philo as the most subtle of all doctors in the knowledge and interpretation of Scripture. See *Letter* 127 in *The Chronicles and Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland in the Middle Ages*.

[2] He defended the genuineness of the blood of Christ which had been sent to the King and by him had been presented to Westminster. See *Letter* 127.

[3] Henderson, *Documents*, p. 435. A few years after this Bull was issued, the Council of Vienne (1311) made a dogma against usury, based upon an erroneous translation of Luke 6:35, where they read *nihil unde sperantes* instead of *nihil desperantes*. See Döllinger, *Studies in European History*, p. 176.

mean the mystical body of Christ. The second passage is from Genesis (6 : 13–16). The ark of Noah symbolized the Church, and as there was but one ark, so there is but one Church; and the fact that the ark was finished "in one cubit" meant that one Noah (*i.e.* the Pope of any particular age) was the helmsman. And, finally, when the psalmist says (22 : 20) : —

> "Deliver my soul from the sword,
> My darling from the power of the dog,"

he means by "soul" Christ himself, and by "darling" he means the Church, whose oneness is also plainly signified by the seamless garment of Jesus.

It remains now to sum up in a few words the significance of the long period in the history of Christian interpretation which we have all too briefly considered. It furnishes a striking parallel to the history of Old Testament interpretation in the Jewish Synagogue. The Fathers of the early centuries answer to the Elders from Ezra's day down to Christ. The traditions of the Elders, which not infrequently eclipsed and abrogated the law of God, have their counterpart in the expositions of the Christian Fathers from the second to the fifth century, which expositions, during the mediæval period, obscured and even annulled the sense of the divine word. To the compilation of the two Talmuds the *Catenae* correspond, which, beginning in the sixth and seventh centuries, grew up to the proportions which we see in the *Aurea Catena* of Aquinas. In both cases the Bible is treated as a book of mysteries, which are to be unfolded by mystical interpretation. In the

mediæval period of the Church, as in the Talmudic period of the Synagogue, an orthodox theology, resting on tradition which was interpreted and backed by ecclesiastical authority, discountenanced or anathematized independent investigation of Scripture. As among the Jews in the Talmudic period the Old Testament was to be read by the light of the authorized interpretation, so in the mediæval period the entire Bible was to be read, if at all, through the eyes of the Fathers. And so it came to pass that the influence of the Fathers on the conceptions of Christian theology immeasurably surpassed the influence of Christ and his apostles.

CHAPTER VIII

INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE BY THE REFORMERS

In passing from the mediæval type of interpretation to the modern, one must not neglect those writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries whose use of the Bible foreshadowed in some degree the coming advance. Among these an honorable place belongs to that man who leads the company of great modern translators of the Scriptures.

John Wyclif (1324–1384) fills a larger place in the history of ecclesiastical reform than he does in the history of interpretation. As a bold and powerful critic of papal abuses and as a mighty champion of the principle that the authority of the Bible is higher than the authority of the Church, — a principle which had been buried since the very earliest Christian times, — it can be said of Wyclif that he has profoundly affected the entire spirit of the Western world.[1] His blow struck a spark from the flint, Hus applied the spark to the coals, and Luther, having lighted the torch of the Reformation at those coals, bore it aloft until all Europe saw its light and felt its heat.[2] The German reformer himself, apparently without knowing of the dependence of Hus on Wyclif, exclaimed, after he became

[1] Buddensieg, *Johann Wiclif und seine Zeit*, p. 3.

[2] These are the parts assigned to the three reformers in a woodcut of the year 1572. See Buddensieg, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

acquainted with the principles of the Bohemian martyr, "We are all Hussites without knowing it!" According to the investigations of Loserth,[1] it now appears that, in recognizing his indebtedness to Hus, Luther was in reality recognizing his indebtedness to Wyclif.

But though Wyclif's significance as a reformer is greater than his significance as an interpreter of Scripture, which is true also of Luther and Luther's age, we are not to suppose that, even in this latter capacity, his work was without abiding influence. It is true, his method of exegesis was thoroughly mediæval. Thus, with the Fathers, he found Christ active in the Old Testament,[2] and saw there minute prophecies of New Testament events.[3] Like the mediæval interpreters, he was almost entirely ignorant of Greek,[4] and, what is more significant, was a slave to the allegorical method of interpretation. Simple historical events, like Christ's sleeping in the boat,[5] and material objects like Solomon's temple,[6] were mystically understood. Wyclif treated plain narratives in the genuine Alexandrian way. Thus, for example, commenting on Mark 7:31, which says that Jesus went out from the borders of Tyre and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee through the midst

[1] *Wiclif and Hus*, English translation. Loserth shows conclusively that Hus (1369–1415) was completely dominated by Wyclif.

[2] See *Select English Works of John Wyclif*, edited from Mss. by Thomas Arnold, 3. 82, 85, 87, 89.

[3] See, *e.g.*, *Select Works*, 3. 222: "The Holy Ghost saith of Judas Iscariot (Ps. 109:7), 'His prayer be made into sin.'"

[4] See Capes, *The English Church in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries*, p. 110; and Buddensieg, *Johann Wiclif und seine Zeit*, p. 177.

[5] See *Select Works*, 1. 107.

[6] See *Tractatus de ecclesia*, edited by Loserth, p. 125.

of the borders of Decapolis, he interprets the going from the land of Tyre as referring to Christ's going from the bosom of the Father, by virtue of a fanciful etymology of the word "Tyre"; the coming to Sidon was fulfilled when the angel Gabriel came to Mary, this notion being derived from a *double* etymology of the word "Sidon"; the going to the Lake of Galilee meant going to *men*, for the word "Galilee" means "a wheel whirling," which is said to be an appropriate symbol of mankind after the fall.[1] It will thus be noticed that the deeper meaning of this passage is all derived by Wyclif from the supposed etymologies of the geographical names contained in it, — an exposition worthy of Philo. Again, explaining the parable of the *Merciful Samaritan*,[2] Wyclif says that the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho signifies our first parents. The thieves were fiends; the priest stood for the patriarchs; the Levite for the prophets and other saints. These all passed by as knowing that they could not help one who had fallen into sin through the temptation of the fiend. The Samaritan was Jesus, who is appropriately represented as a Samaritan *stranger* because of his Godhead! The oil poured on the wounds meant the hope of heaven, and the wine was sharp words "to prick men from sin." Setting the wounded man on his own beast was accomplished when Jesus made his own manhood to bear our sin. "The following day," when the Samaritan left his charge at the inn, signifies the time after the resurrection, and the

[1] See *Select Works*, 1. 29. Wyclif held the theory of a fourfold sense. See *Works*, 4. 277, where it is presented in a *sermon*.

[2] See *Select Works*, 1. 31 f.

"twopence" which he gave for the care of the wounded are his "Godhead and manhood, to feed mankind till the day of doom." The innkeeper is all whom God has chosen to feed his Church.

Plainly, this interpretation utterly obscures the simple and practical teaching of the words of Jesus; and like this there is much in Wyclif's writings.[1]

But there is, fortunately, another aspect of Wyclif's activity in its bearing upon the Scripture. There are two points in which, notwithstanding his false method of exegesis, his biblical work was of value. In the first place, he *magnified* the Bible — a great event after a thousand years of neglect. "If there were a hundred popes," he said in a strain that reminds us of Luther, "and if all friars were cardinals, one ought not to trust them in matters of faith, except as they agree with Holy Scripture." "In a single word of Peter there is more profitable doctrine than in all decretals and bulls."[2] The depth and power of his conviction of the infinite importance of Scripture was manifested in his translation of the Bible into English. This translation, though circulated in manuscript, was, more than any other single force, the means of maintaining spiritual life in England during the century and a half that intervened between Wyclif's death and Tyndale's translation.

There was also a second feature of Wyclif's work that is noteworthy in the history of interpretation. He had some sense of the historical *development* of Scripture. This was

[1] See *De ecclesia*, pp. 472 f. The "worthy woman" of Prov. 31 is elaborately explained as the Church. See also 1. 4, 12; 2. 258, 305.

[2] Buddensieg, *op. cit.*, pp. 179, 196.

doubtless very imperfect, perhaps an instinctive feeling rather than an intellectual perception, yet it was a most unusual phenomenon; a gleam of a truth that was to emerge into clear manifestation in coming time. It was this sense of development which led Wyclif, unlike any preacher who had gone before him for many centuries, to find the almost exclusive material of his preaching in the Gospel. Of the two hundred and ninety-four sermons in Arnold's edition of Wyclif's English works, three only are on Old Testament texts, fifty-two on texts from the Epistles, and two hundred and thirty-nine on the Gospels.

It is true that Wyclif, influenced by the Fathers, saw Christ personally active in the Old Testament, for example, uttering the words of the Decalogue;[1] yet in his preaching he gravitated steadily to the Gospel as the full and final revelation of Christ.

Quite different from Wyclif as interpreters, and yet like him belonging to the coming age, in some measure, were John Gerson (1363–1429),[2] and John of Goch (†1475). Both were deeply convinced of the necessity of setting up the literal sense of Scripture as the absolute standard for the Church. Gerson belonged to the Middle Ages in one fundamental point; namely, that he made the authority of the Church supreme in determining the sense of Scripture. The literal sense is to be judged, he says, according as the Church, inspired and governed by the Holy Spirit, has de-

[1] See, *e.g.*, *Select Works*, 3. 87, 89.

[2] Gerson, "doctor christianissimus," was born near Rheims, became chancellor of the University of Paris, and was prominent at the Councils of Pisa and Constance.

termined, and not according to the judgment and interpretation of any individual.[1] The rigidity of Gerson's conviction on this matter is apparent when he declares that those who deny the literal sense of Scripture as determined and received by the Church ought not to be treated with curious ratiocinations (*curiosis ratiocinationibus*), but with fixed punishments.[2] In harmony with this principle he voted for the burning of Hus. John of Goch, though allowing the fourfold sense of Scripture, was in advance of his age in his preference for the literal sense, and yet more in his insistence that, in theological argumentation, the *exclusive* appeal should be to the literal sense.[3]

Of greater influence on interpretation than Gerson and Goch were the unknown author of the *Theologia Germania* and Thomas à Kempis († 1471). The *Theologia Germania*[4] (probably of the fifteenth century) was deeply influenced by Tauler[5] († 1363), the mystic of Strassburg, and was in turn a serious force in moulding Luther's belief.[6] It shares with the *Imitation of Christ* by à Kempis

[1] See *Propositiones de sensu litterali sacrae scripturae* in the *Opera omnia*, edited by Du Pin, Antwerp, 1706, *Propositio* 3. Gerson appears to have been the first writer to treat of the literal sense of Scripture in a systematic manner. His twelve propositions are of very unequal value.

[2] See *op. cit.*, *Propositio* 7.

[3] See Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, 1. 54.

[4] The first published title of the book was *Ein deutsch Theologia.*

[5] It quotes from Tauler forty times, from Boëthius fifteen times. See the translation of S. Winkworth.

[6] Luther, in his *Vorrede* to the book (1518), says, "Und das ich nach meynem alten narren rüme, ist myr nehst der Biblien und S. Augustino nit vorkummen eyn Buch, dar auss ich mehr erlernet hab und will, was got, Christus, mensch und alle ding sein." See Böhlau's edition of Luther's *Werke*, 1. 378–379.

the honor of being one of the two most widely circulated writings of the fifteenth century. Both the *Theologia Germania* and the *Imitation* are remarkably free from allegorical interpretation of Scripture, more so than the writings of the German reformers. They make little formal use of the sacred text, as compared with the writings of the Schoolmen, *e.g.*, Bernard of Clairvaux, or the writings of the Carlovingian times, and yet, far beyond any of the Schoolmen or any preceding mediæval writer, they impress on the reader the *truth* of Scripture. They are not so much an interpretation of the letter of Scripture as an incarnation of its spirit.[1] Their interest in the Bible is altogether practical. They move among the great moral and spiritual passages whose main purport is clear. More than any writings for a thousand years prior to Wyclif they find their sustenance in the New Testament rather than in the Old. No writing of the mediæval period is to be compared with the *Imitation* in its spiritual apprehension of Jesus.[2] Thus these writings, in spite of their mediævalism at many points, afford a noble illustration of practical exegesis. They do not belong to the scientific literature of interpretation, but they are splendid monuments of the reaction from barren scholastic exegesis, and bear abiding witness to the general intelligibility of the Bible.[3]

[1] Every intelligent reader of the *Imitation* knows that its conception of Christianity has some rather serious defects, as, for example, its devotion to the monastic ideal of life.

[2] See, *e.g.*, Book 2, chapter 8.

[3] John Wessel († 1489), a pupil of à Kempis and said to have taught Reuchlin the elements of Hebrew (see Mayerhoff, *Johann Reuchlin und seine Zeit*, p. 2), put the authority of Scripture above that of the

When now we pass from the exegesis of Wyclif and even from that of the *Imitation* and the *Theologia Germania* to that of the early part of the sixteenth century, we are at once aware of the presence of a new force. Men are no more deeply in earnest to know what the Scriptures teach than were à Kempis and Wyclif, but their earnestness has a new direction. No longer do they stop at the Vulgate, as had been the universal custom for centuries, but with grammar and lexicon at their side they are poring over the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament. This was an event which both for that time and for the future was quite worthy to be placed side by side with the discovery of the New World. It was an event which in its significance for the interpretation of Scripture was without parallel since the composition of the New Testament.

This new method of studying the Bible stood in closest connection with the reformation of the Church, yet was not the cause of that reformation. The real cause is suggested by Luther in his *Table Talk*, when he says that Wyclif and Hus attacked the immoral *conduct* of the papists, and that he himself had chiefly resisted their *doctrine*.[1] That is to say, the Reformation was caused by the intolerable abuses of ecclesiastical authority which everywhere prevailed. The reformers of the sixteenth century did not become such through a new method of interpreting the Scripture, though they had from the beginning a more

Church and advocated a natural interpretation. See Kettlewell, *Thomas à Kempis*, 2. 334.

[1] See *The Table Talk or Familiar Discourse of Martin Luther*, Hazlitt's edition, p. 415.

spiritual apprehension of its great truths than was to be found among the leaders of the Church; but, being impelled to be reformers by the reaction of a sound moral and religious nature against the corruption of the Church, they eagerly seized on the new method of approach to revealed truth as a providential instrument with which to fortify and defend their position.

This new method of approaching the Bible was a part of the "new learning," that broad intellectual movement of which Luther wrote in 1525: "I am convinced that pure theology cannot exist without knowledge of the sciences, as hitherto it has lain prostrate with their fall. Yea, I see that a revelation of the divine word would never have been made but for the rediscovery of languages (*i.e.*, the cultivation of Greek and Hebrew) and sciences." [1]

The new learning arose in Italy in the fifteenth century, and had there its most brilliant period at the close of that century and in the first quarter of the next.[2] It was fostered by the highest ecclesiastics, as Alexander VI († 1503), Julius II († 1513), and Leo X († 1521), unconscious, of course, that what they vied with one another in promoting would one day help to shake their power to its very centre and rob them of a large part of their income.

North of the Alps, England and Germany were the first to transplant the new learning and to show a development

[1] Quoted by Holstein in *Die Reformation im Spiegelbilde der dramatischen Litteratur des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*, p. 14. See *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*, Nos. 14–15.

[2] See, in general, on this period, *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. II; *Medicean Rome*, chapter 1.

that affected the interpretation of Scripture. Grocyn taught Greek at Oxford in 1490, Linacre, who was famous in 1500, was one of the teachers of Erasmus, and Colet lectured at Oxford on the Epistles of Paul in 1497.[1] All these had studied in Italy. Among the Germans Agricola taught Greek at Heidelberg in 1483,[2] Pellican published the first help to the study of Hebrew in 1503,[3] Erasmus published his *Praise of Folly* in 1511, and Reuchlin was professor of Greek and Hebrew at Ingolstadt in 1519.

The desire to learn Greek and Hebrew was little less than a passion.[4] Reuchlin (1455–1523) had private pupils in Hebrew many years before the establishment of a professorship in this language. Melanchthon at Wittenberg in 1518 was thronged by students eager to learn Greek.[5] Two years earlier Erasmus wrote that the generality of the scholars whom he met in Basel understood Hebrew,[6] and a little later Zwingli reports of his colleagues in Zurich that many of them knew Hebrew and Greek.[7] The curriculum of certain grammar schools in

[1] See Einstein, *The Italian Renaissance in England*, pp. 30–39.

[2] A professorship was not established there till 1498. See Mayerhoff, *Johann Reuchlin und seine Zeit*, p. 35. On the religious aim of the German Humanists see Maurenbrecher, *Geschichte der Katholischen Reformation*, 1. 65.

[3] The title of this booklet was *De modo legendi et intelligendi hebraea.*

[4] This intensity characterized the entire intellectual movement. Hutten exclaimed, "O Age, O Science, it is a joy to live!" See Roth, *Willibald Pirkheimer*, in *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*, No. 21.

[5] See Hugo Holstein, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[6] See Hagenbach, *History of the Reformation*, 1. 69.

[7] See Jackson, *Selected Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, p. 57.

Germany, as Isny and Ilfeld, included the study of Hebrew.[1] Erasmus met men at Strassburg and elsewhere who thought that if they only knew Hebrew, they might neglect all other languages and the sciences.[2] There were ten or more Hebrew grammars and lexicons published in the first half of the sixteenth century in Germany and Switzerland — an amazing number when one considers the labor necessary to such a work at that time and the great expense of printing books in Hebrew.[3]

The awakened interest in Greek was largely directed toward the Bible. It was studied as the key to the understanding of the New Testament. Hebrew in like manner was pursued for the sake of the Old Testament. Reuchlin's aim in all his Hebrew studies was to promote the knowledge of God.[4] And yet the pupils of the new learning did not *directly* promote the science of interpretation. Reuchlin, its foremost Hebrew scholar, was a believer in the extreme form of mystical interpretation,[5] and Erasmus, its most distinguished representative, held Origen to be the incomparable exegete.[6] He classed Origen with Jerome, and both with Paul.[7] It is not

[1] See Geiger, *Das Studium der hebr. Sprache in Deutschland vom Ende des xv. bis zur Mitte des xvi. Jahrhunderts*, p. 128.

[2] See Geiger, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

[3] Böschenstein, Capito, Cellarin, Fagius, Förster, and Münster put forth grammars or lexicons or both, in addition to Pellican and Reuchlin. See Geiger, *op. cit.*

[4] See Mayerhoff, *Johann Reuchlin und seine Zeit*, p. 45.

[5] Of his *De verbo mirifico* (1495) nine editions were published in the sixteenth century. See Mayerhoff, *op. cit.*

[6] See his *Ratio seu methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram theologiam*, T. 5 of the *Opera omnia*, 1704.

[7] See the *Enchiridion*, 2 and 8.

strange, then, that his own exegetical writings show everywhere the leaven of the mystical principle. The *letter* of Scripture, he says, is often barren or even absurd, and is to be despised. David's adultery, Samson's love of a harlot, the sin of Lot's daughters, and a thousand similar things are illustrations of this class of Scriptures, and must all be understood allegorically. Not only by its adherence to the allegorical method but also by its dogmatic character, the exegesis of Erasmus is seen to be essentially mediæval. It maintains the traditional dogmas of the Church.[1]

But Humanism helped to lay foundations for a better interpretation of Scripture, though itself unable to build thereon. Luther looked up to Reuchlin as a father, and used his lexicon in the translation of the Old Testament. Aleander, the papal *nuntio*, writing from Worms in 1521, calls Erasmus "the great corner-stone" of the German heresy,[3] and though this was not true in the sense in which he thought it true, for Erasmus remained in the fold of the Church, yet in an important sense it *was* true. The writings of Erasmus doubtless did more than any other single agency for the promotion of the study of

[1] See, *e.g.*, the *Paraphrasis in evangelium secundum Joanneum*, Basileae, 1523. In the rendering of chapter 1 : 1 we read, "Nec sic adhaerebat patri, quemadmodum accidens adhaeret substantiae, sed deus erat ex deo, deus erat in deo, deus erat apud deum." And see also the paraphrase of vs. 10.

[2] See his letter to Reuchlin, 1518, in Holstein's *Die Reformation im Spiegelbilde der dramatischen Litteratur des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*, p. 15.

[3] See Kalkoff, *Die Depeschen des Nuntius Aleander*, p. 48, in *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*, No. 17.

Greek and Hebrew,[1] and for the creation of an atmosphere in which the Reformation might realize its aims. Because he did this fundamental work, the word of Aleander contained much truth. But it is scarcely possible to justify the statement of a modern writer who says that "the spirit of Erasmus is the life of scientific criticism, the breath of modern scholarship."[2] Erasmus was not a critical scholar,[3] and was not a progressive interpreter. His great service for interpretation, like that of Reuchlin, was indirect. How the reformers used the new learning, what they accomplished for the interpretation of Scripture with the instruments which Erasmus and Reuchlin and their fellow-laborers made ready to their hand, we have now to consider.[4]

Martin Luther at the age of twenty-two began to study the Bible seriously, especially the prophets and Paul;[5] at

[1] For exhortations to the study of Greek and Hebrew see, *e.g.*, the *Apologia*, third edition, 1522, and the *Ratio perveniendi ad veram theologiam.*

[2] See Beard in *The Hibbert Lectures* for 1883, p. 73.

[3] On the character of his Greek New Testament see Nestle, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament.*

[4] Through Reuchlin and his fellow-laborers the great mediæval Jewish scholars — Saadia (892–942), Rashi (1040–1105), and Kimchi (1160–1235) — became a power in the Christian Church. Nicolas de Lyra was influenced by Rashi (see Morris Liber on Rashi in the *Jewish Encyclopædia*) and in turn influenced Luther (see *Table Talk*, p. 234). Pagninus' grammar is said to be merely a reproduction of Kimchi's (see Levias in *Jewish Encyclopædia*, article "Kimchi"), and Reuchlin published a revised edition of Kimchi's Hebrew grammar in 1520. His own Hebrew grammar followed Kimchi's. See Geiger, *op. cit.*, p. 56. Paul Fagius published Kimchi's commentary on the first ten Psalms.

[5] See Gieseler's *Kirchengeschichte*, 3. 1. 11; *Table Talk*, p. 15.

the age of twenty-nine, with a slight knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, he was expounding the Scripture at Wittenberg;[1] at thirty-five he was studying Greek with Melanchthon;[2] at thirty-eight he began his translation of the New Testament; at forty-four he published his commentary on Genesis, and seven years later his translation of the Old Testament. It will be seen from this outline that Luther's knowledge of Greek and Hebrew was chiefly acquired after he had passed thirty, and when he was plunged in the heat of controversy and the thousand distractions of his reformatory work.[3] In the study of Greek he was helped, as we have seen, by his younger colleague, Melanchthon, but in Hebrew he appears to have been thrown almost entirely on his own private study.[4] It is also important to notice that, when he began his exegetical publications,[5] he was engaged in the overthrow of papal doctrine. It would be strange, indeed, if his intense polemical interests had not warped his exegetical faculty.

In approaching Luther as an exegete, while it is interesting to know that he had at hand philological aids for ascertaining the meaning of Greek and Hebrew words, it is no less interesting to know his attitude toward the Fathers.

[1] See Köstlin, *Martin Luther, sein Leben und seine Schriften*, 1. 115.

[2] See Köstlin, *op. cit.*, 1. 293.

[3] The *Theses* were nailed up October 31, 1517, and the *Bull* burned December 12, 1520.

[4] Luther had a Hebrew lexicon while at Erfurt (1501–1508) (see Köstlin, 1. 115), and while in Wittenberg he may have received instruction from Böschenstein and others who, with a good many interruptions, taught Hebrew in the University.

[5] His Latin commentary on Galatians was published in 1519, the *Operationes in Psalmos*, 1519–1521.

He appears not to have realized how deeply he was dependent upon them, whether as interpreter or as theologian. In principle, he rejected allegorical interpretation, and declared that he had based his teaching upon the literal sense of Scripture.[1] Origen, whom Erasmus exalted so highly, was to Luther naught but foolishness.[2] It was doubtless because of their allegorizing, as well as because of their failure to teach his doctrine of justification, that Luther said of the teachers of the early Church: "When God's word is expounded and glossed by the Fathers, it is as when one strains milk through a coal-sack."[3] We shall see when we come to examine some of Luther's exegetical work whether his practice agreed with his theory in this matter of allegory, or whether, after all, the Fathers were not a great constraining force with him.

We are not concerned with the theology of Luther except as it has a bearing on his interpretation of Scripture. Now it is plain from his writings that, although he often criticised the Fathers and depreciated their teaching of Christianity, as, for example, when he said regarding Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* that all the Fathers and all the writers of sentences were of less worth,[4] he nevertheless was, as Harnack has said, "the restorer of the old dogma," who unconsciously "gave new life to the formulæ of Greek Christianity."[5] His deep aversion to papal doctrine which

[1] See *Table Talk*, p. 6. In Böhlau's edition of Luther's *Werke*, 3. 11, Luther says: "In scripturis nulla videlicet allegoria, tropologia, anagoge nisi alibi historice idem expresse dicatur. Alioquin ludibrium fieret scriptura."

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 328.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 228.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[5] See *History of Dogma*, 7. 173.

virtually exalted the teaching of the Fathers above the Scripture itself led him to strong utterances on their weakness and inadequacy,[1] and yet their conceptions are his conceptions. The sphere of his reform was divine worship, not biblical theology.[2] When he was at Erfurt he often read the works of Augustin, and he says that he remembered them well.[3] The fundamental ancient conceptions entered into his very blood, and he never asked whether they were according to Scripture. When he broke away from the Fathers in the doctrine of inspiration, his view was uncertain. At one time he advocated the right to use reason in the investigation of Scripture, and his own practice shows that he felt himself free to criticise not only the canon but also the comparative value of various biblical books;[4] but in principle he clung to verbal inspiration. We ought not to criticise the Scriptures by our mere reason, he says, but the Holy Ghost must be our only master.[5] He identified the Scriptures with the word of God.[6] Thus he wavered between two irreconcilable principles, though in his later years he was increasingly hostile to reason, which he even styled "the all-cruelest and most fatal enemy of God."[7]

[1] See, *e.g.*, *Table Talk*, pp. 530, 534, 539.

[2] See Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 7. 191.

[3] So Melanchthon, quoted by Gieseler, *Kirchengeschichte*, 3. 1. 12.

[4] Thus he admitted the existence of errors in Scripture (see Romberg, *Die Lehre Luther's von der heiligen Schrift*, p. 16); he rejected certain books which the ancient Church accepted, and accepted some which were rejected of old (see Romberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–23).

[5] See *Table Talk*, pp. 2–3.

[6] See Harnack, *op. cit.*, 7. 246; Romberg, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[7] Quoted by Beard, *The Hibbert Lectures*, p. 163.

Having taken this preliminary survey of Luther's exegetical qualifications, we now proceed to a closer acquaintance with his exegetical work.

We notice at the outset that, much as Luther exalted Christ and the Gospel, the biblical books on which he bestowed the most labor were Psalms, Genesis, and the Epistles of Paul. For the exaltation of Christ it hardly mattered to him what part of the Scripture he chose to expound. Galatians and Romans were to him the purest Gospel, though they are in reality but a human *interpretation* of the Gospel. The Psalms he regarded as a "short Bible," "almost as a summary of the whole Bible," and Genesis was held by him to be a *liber sanctissimus*.[1] Therefore, since his "right touchstone" for testing all biblical books was to observe whether they witness to Christ, we know at the start that he found abundant witness of this character in Genesis.

Luther published a commentary on the Psalms in 1519–1521.[2] Erasmus in acknowledging a copy from the author said that it pleased him exceedingly, and Justus Jonas declared that the book was by the Holy Spirit.[3] If this judgment of the admiring Jonas was a true one, then Augustin's commentary on the Psalms was also *ex spiritu sancto*, for Luther's work is fundamentally the same.

[1] See Romberg, *op. cit.*, p. 12; Böhlau's edition of Luther's *Werke*, vol. 24.

[2] The *Dictata super Psalterium* were published in 1513–1516.

[3] See Böhlau's edition of Luther's *Werke*, 5. 2–3. Köstlin, however, says (see *Martin Luther*, 1. 112), "Seine Anmerkungen zum Psalter haben für uns weniger die Bedeutung einer eigentlich exegetischen Leistung als einer Darstellung seiner neu gewonnenen dogmatischen Überzeugungen."

Its most characteristic feature is its attempt to refer the Psalms to Christ. Thus Psalm 1 is said to speak literally of Christ. He is the man who walked not in the counsel of sinners. The "leaf" that shall not wither is Christ's word, of which he said that, though heaven and earth should pass away, it should not pass away. Though at the beginning of his book [1] Luther says it is best to learn the sense of Scripture from the letter, yet when he comes to the words in Ps. 1:

> "The unrighteous are not so,
> But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away,"

he quite unnecessarily leaves the letter, and declares that the wind is the *impetus* of the anger of the Lord, and he refers the "chaff" (Luther has "dust") to the Jews. They are also the "sinners" who, the psalmist says, shall not stand in the "council" of the righteous, *i.e.*, in the Christian Church. The third Psalm is spoken, says Luther, in the person of Christ's assumed humanity; the fourth is spoken in the person of the assumed human nature and is addressed to the entire Trinity; the sixth is composed principally of words of Christ; the eighth concerns Christ's ascension and glorification; in the fifteenth the prophet asks who is worthy to dwell in the Church of Christ, and it is the Lord Jesus who replies; the twenty-fourth prophesies that Christ as Lord of all will receive whomsoever he pleases without respect of person; the twenty-fifth is a prayer of Christ to the Father; in the thirtieth we hear

[1] See Böhlau's edition of Luther's *Werke*, 3. 11. This reference and some of the following ones are to the *Dictata*, not the *Operationes*.

Christ exult concerning his glorious resurrection from death and the grave; and in the forty-sixth the Church praises Christ for his protection and for the extermination of all its enemies. This may suffice to indicate the most characteristic feature of Luther's exposition of the Psalms. If we inquire on what ground Christ is thus read into these ancient Hebrew lyrics, these words from the author's Preface may in part suggest the answer: "If the Old Testament can be expounded by human sense without the New Testament, I shall say that the New Testament is given in vain." [1] Thus we have the general assumption that the Old Testament is a book of mysteries, to which the New Testament alone offers a key. In his exposition of the third Psalm Luther gives us a striking illustration of the sort of difficulty that led him to refer the Psalms to Christ. In the fifth verse of that Psalm are these words: —

> "I laid me down and slept;
> I awaked; for Jehovah sustaineth me."

It is absurd, says Luther, to suppose that these words refer to natural sleep, and if they do not, then of course they refer to the resurrection of Jesus, and therefore the entire Psalm is to be regarded as spoken by him.[2] Again, how easily Luther reached the conclusion that any particular Psalm was to be ascribed to Christ, is seen in the fact that, because Christ is said to have voiced his distress on the cross in words from Ps. 22, *therefore* the entire Psalm was spoken *by* him.

It is obvious to-day that any historical interpretation of

[1] See Böhlau's edition of Luther's *Werke*, 3. 12.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. 5, *Operationes in Psalmos.*

the Psalms is made utterly impossible by this fundamental assumption. One might as well speak of an interpretation of Roger Bacon as historical which proceeded on the assumption that the science of the twentieth century is to be found hidden in him.

The extremely arbitrary character of Luther's interpretation of details in the Psalms, due in part to the false assumption regarding their relation to Christ, in part to the ancient tendency to find everywhere in Scripture a profound sense, may be briefly illustrated. The poetical designation of the eastern sky as "the womb of the morning," in Ps. 110, is said to point to the supernatural birth of Christ, for Mary is in many places of Scripture called the "dawn" (Morgenröthe) because she brought in the true day and eternal life.[1] Unfortunately the interpreter does not tell us *where* Mary is so designated. Again, in Ps. 67, in the words "God, even our own God, will bless us, God will bless us," Luther sees the Christian Trinity. The first time that the Psalm mentions God, the Father is meant; then by "our God" it means the Son who was made ours through the assumption of the flesh; and finally, when it says "God shall bless us," it speaks of the Holy Spirit.[2] "Let God arise," cries the author of Ps. 68; "let his enemies be scattered!" The God of this verse, says Luther, is Jesus Christ, and the rising is his resurrection. When we read in the same Psalm, "He bringeth out the prisoners into prosperity," that means the fathers whom Christ brought out of hell. The mountain which God

[1] See Böhlau's edition of Luther's *Werke*, vol. 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. 3.

hath desired for a habitation (Ps. 68 : 16), which the psalmist identifies with the mountain of Bashan, is said by Luther to mean the humanity of Christ.[1]

Turn for a moment to Luther's exposition of Genesis, which Köstlin [2] calls "the most comprehensive and richest of his exegetical writings." This, says Luther, is almost the noblest book of the Old Testament. It contains more figures of Christ and his kingdom than any other book. By word and example it teaches nothing else than the one Christ.[3] Being convinced of this, Luther makes it his aim to show that Christ is everywhere taught. He finds the Trinity with an "unspeakable and unfathomable" Christ in the first verses of the first chapter;[4] the ark signifies the Christian Church, and the story of Joseph is full of teaching about the kingdom of Christ.[5]

Strangely enough, in the midst of this purely fanciful exposition, we meet the great principle that a teaching of Scripture which is to form an article of faith must be so grounded and sure that "a man would rest his life upon it." This truth is still far in advance of the practice of the Church, but the exposition in which it stands is thoroughly mediæval.

In Böhlau's critical edition of Luther's works the volume on the *Minor Prophets* is said to show us Luther at the high level of his independence as an interpreter, more under the influence of Reuchlin than under that of Nicolas

[1] See last reference.

[2] See *Martin Luther, sein Leben und seine Schriften*, 2. 433.

[3] See the Böhlau edition, 24. 710.

[4] *Ibid.*, 24. 29.

[5] *Ibid.*, 24. 176, 615.

de Lyra. He sometimes recognizes the connection of thought, and sometimes appreciates the historical background. But still it is admitted that he makes the prophets think and speak New Testament thought.[1] This is the most fundamental and all-pervasive evil of Luther's exposition of the prophets as of all his Old Testament exposition. Note two or three instances. In the last chapter of Hosea a new day is pictured for Israel. Luther refers this at once to the Christian dispensation and allegorizes all the numerous details. Thus when it is said that Israel's beauty shall be as the olive tree, this signifies that Christians will be a people of *mercy* and *grace*. The good *name* of Christians is indicated when it is said that Israel's smell shall be as the smell of Lebanon.[2] Jonah's entire experience was parallel to that of Christ, and the speaker in Mal. 3 is said to be Christ himself.[3]

Although Luther as an expositor was more largely occupied with the Old Testament than with the New, it is obvious that the spirit of the New was more deeply grasped by him than was that of the Old. He knew it by a profound experience of its saving truth — an experience which shed something of its glory over the pages of his translation; but his exegesis of the New Testament has no greater scientific worth than that of the Old. It is marked by failure to realize the historical situation of a given text and also by a tendency to let the feelings or polemical interests determine the sense. Thus "daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer is said to signify the word of God, *i.e.*, Jesus Christ,

[1] Compare Köstlin, *Martin Luther*, 2. 433.

[2] See the Böhlau edition, vol. 13.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. 13.

and in confirmation of this view the language of John is quoted, "I am the living bread."[1] This is plainly an utter failure to grasp the simplicity of the gospel narrative. There is no indication in Luther's words on the Lord's Prayer that he thought of bodily needs *at all* as included in the Master's petition for daily bread. Again, when any one prays from the heart the words "Our Father who art in heaven," he confesses himself wretched on earth, says Luther, and far from God. But can that possibly have been the thought of Jesus? Did he think of himself as far from God because he spoke of God as *in heaven?* Did he not rather think of God as present with him, and of himself as being for this reason supremely blessed?

But we refrain from giving further detailed illustration of Luther's New Testament exposition, and add a few words by way of summing up both his strength and his weakness as an exegete. His knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, though considerable for his day, was not sufficient to give a distinctively linguistic value to his exegetical work. His break with traditional conceptions of the Scriptures and with the ancient theology was not so deep as to give an essentially new character to his exposition. He partially grasped some true and radical principles, as the place of reason in the interpretation of Scripture and the insufficiency of allegory as a basis of Christian doctrine, but his application of these principles did not constitute a marked feature of his exegetical work. He said that teachers should take good heed not to make a Moses out of Christ

[1] See the Böhlau edition, vol. 2, *Auslegung deutsch des Vater unnser fuer dye einfiltigen leyen.*

nor to make a Christ out of Moses,[1] yet he himself found all fundamental Christian doctrines in Genesis, and preferred the Gospel in the semi-dogmatic form in which it appears in Paul's Epistles rather than in the simple, untheological words of Jesus.

Butzer of Strassburg, a younger contemporary of Luther who acquired a wide reputation as a theologian both on the continent and in England, says that Luther used the Scriptures better and more skilfully than any one had done for some hundreds of years.[2] To this judgment we readily assent. His exposition does mark progress as compared with that of the mediæval period, notably in its good sense and practical character, but the best, most original elements in his views of Scripture are found throughout his writings as *almost wholly unapplied* truths.

By the side of Luther stood Melanchthon, younger by fourteen years, who, until he came under the influence of the great reformer, was a Humanist pure and simple. His first publication was a Greek grammar (1518), his most important one the *Loci Communes* (1521), "an invincible book," according to Luther, and worthy of reception into the canon.[3] It follows from this judgment that Melanchthon's conception of Christianity and his principles of exegesis were not widely different from Luther's.

In Melanchthon, as in Luther, there was a conspicuous contrast between exegetical *principles* and exegetical *practice*. In principle he advocated a grammatical inter-

[1] See *Table Talk*, p. 289.

[2] See Baum, *Capito und Butzer Strassburgs Reformatoren.*

[3] See Sell, *Philip Melanchthon* in *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*, No. 56.

pretation and was opposed to any sense save the literal. What he was in practice we can learn from the *Loci*.[1] Like Luther, he made a Christian book out of the Old Testament, and was always controlled, or at least greatly influenced, in his exposition by the traditional doctrines of the Church. Thus, for example, when he advances Scripture proof of the resurrection of the dead and their subsequent state, he gives three passages from the New Testament and *seventeen* from the Old.[2] When discussing the baptism of infants, he declares that there is no salvation outside the Church,[3] the reason being that outside the Church there is neither word nor sacrament, as though the sacraments were to be placed on a level with the Bible, and as though the Bible and sacraments were absolutely necessary to salvation. The law was not given to Israel, he says, that the people might be righteous in the sight of God, but to separate Israel from other peoples, and *for the preaching of Christ*.[4]

In the Lord's Prayer, the words "who art in heaven," mean, says Melanchthon, that God is everywhere truly present, and the petition "Forgive us our debts" teaches that in every prayer *that* faith is to be exhibited which believes the remission of sins and apprehends Christ as mediator and intercessor, so that we may know that we draw near to the Father through this high priest and are

[1] My references are to the edition of 1535.

[2] See the chapter *De resurrectione mortuorum*.

[3] "Non est autem extra ecclesiam salus, ubi nec verbum, nec sacramentum est."

[4] See under *De discrimine veteris et novi testamenti*.

heard on account of him.[1] This exegesis is a perfect illustration of the subjection of Scripture to traditional doctrine. It is true that the text is not allegorized, but its plain sense is as completely ignored as it could be by the most refined allegorization.

Melanchthon, then, both in exegetical principle and practice, stands by the side of Luther. Though more deeply influenced by Humanism than he, and in turn contributing more to the study of Greek,[2] both as expositors of Scripture were irresistibly swept along by the deep exegetical and theological current flowing down from past centuries. In one point Melanchthon was plainly far superior to Luther. His exegesis is somewhat less dogmatic. Kant's judgment of the reformers in their attitude toward the Bible is less fitly applied to Melanchthon than to Luther. Their supposed freedom of investigation he characterizes as follows: "Draw your conclusions from the Bible, but take care that you do not discover anything in the Bible except what *we* find there."[3] "A man," says Luther, "must be able to affirm, I know for certain that what I teach is the only word of God, and whatsoever agrees not with this doctrine is altogether false and spun by the devil."[4] But when a man reaches this point, which Melanchthon never did

[1] "Haec petitio docet semper in omni precatione fidem adhibendam esse quae credat remissionem et apprehendat Christum mediatorem et interpellatorem, ut sciamus nos accedere ad patrem per hunc pontificem et propter eum exaudiri."

[2] See Schaff-Herzog, *Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge*, sub "Melancthon."

[3] Quoted by Lilly, *Renaissance Types*.

[4] See *Table Talk*, p. 18.

reach, there is little probability that he will ever advance further in his knowledge of Scripture.

Zwingli (1484–1531), the reformer of Zurich, was a Humanist [1] like Melanchthon, but with a strong practical bias. He began Greek at the age of twenty-nine, that he might understand the teaching of Christ,[2] but it was not the study of the Bible that made him a reformer. It was the corruption of his countrymen by foreign gold.[3] He had some knowledge of Hebrew, and was so impressed with its value that he offered to instruct the youth of Zurich who should first become acquainted with the elements of the language.[4] And yet it does not appear that Zwingli's knowledge of Greek and Hebrew gave any distinctive and valuable quality to his exegesis. Like Wyclif, he preached the New Testament rather than the Old, and, unlike Luther, he did *not* treat the Epistles of Paul as the purest gospel.[5] His exposition was less completely dominated by the past than was Luther's. The Spirit of God, he said, is so abundant in the Scriptures that every humble reader, without the aid of human authorities, can learn its teaching.[6] Like John Knox, Zwingli was a preacher rather than a writer of books, and partly for that reason his exegesis was not an important force beyond his own Swiss canton.

[1] On Zwingli's education, see Stähelin, *Huldreich Zwingli*, in *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*, No. 3.

[2] See Gieseler, *Kirchengeschichte*, 3. 1, 135.

[3] See Pollard in *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. II.

[4] See *Eine Kurze Erklärung des christlichen Glaubens* in Christoffel's *Huldreich Zwingli*.

[5] See, *e.g.*, Jackson, *Selected Works of H. Zwingli*, p. 106.

[6] See Christoffel, *Huldreich Zwingli*, chapter 1.

Not so with the Genevan reformer John Calvin (1509–1564). He was not only the theologian of his century, but also the expositor. His exegetical writings became the standard not only in Switzerland, but also in the Reformed Churches of Germany, in England, Scotland, and in other places.[1] To him alone among his contemporaries was the honor to be accorded that after three centuries his entire expository writings should be translated into English.

In the *Dedicatory Epistle* of the commentary on Romans, Calvin tells us what he and Grynæus, his tutor in Hebrew in Basel, agreed was the most excellent quality in an interpreter, namely, brevity combined with clearness. Now while one will readily allow that these qualities are excellent, one can scarcely regard them as the *most* excellent. For both might be possessed by an interpreter whose knowledge was quite inadequate, or by one who held such views of the origin and purpose of Scripture as made it impossible for him ever to give a true interpretation. Indeed, we think that even Calvin himself possessed exegetical qualifications of vastly greater importance than the ability to write clearly, we will not say *briefly*, for his commentary on Isaiah and that on Jeremiah extends to four volumes, while those on Psalms and the Minor Prophets have each five volumes. But though Calvin sadly missed the goal of brevity, he attained something more

[1] In this connection it is interesting to note the cosmopolitan character of the dedications of Calvin's exegetical writings. Galatians was dedicated to the Duke of Wirtemberg, Genesis to the Duke of Vendome, Isaiah to Edward VI of England, the Minor Prophets to Gustavus of Sweden, etc.

desirable. For the first time in a thousand years he gave a conspicuous example of *non-allegorical* exposition. One must go back to the best work of the school of Antioch to find so complete a rejection of the method of Philo as is furnished by Calvin. Allegorical interpretations which had been put forth in the early Church and indorsed by illustrious expositors in all the subsequent centuries, like the interpretation of Noah's ark and the seamless garment of Christ, are cast aside as rubbish. This fact alone gives an abiding and distinguished honor to Calvin's exegetical work. What led him to reject allegorical interpretation as something peculiarly satanic,[1] whether it was his legal training at Orleans and Bourges or his native judgment, it is not possible to say, but the fact is clear and is the most striking feature of his interpretation.

Was it Calvin's repugnance to allegorical interpretation which led him to read biblical poetry as prose? Was it his deep conviction of the importance of holding to the literal sense of Scripture that made him blind to the character of so much of the sacred text? This seems not improbable. In the recoil from the unprofitableness of allegory, it was natural to go to an extreme position in regard to literalness. At any rate, to such an extreme Calvin did go, and this insistence on the literal sense, especially in the explanation of the Old Testament, is a marked weakness of his interpretation. Thus, for example, he takes the stories of the early chapters of Genesis as pure history. Satan entered into the serpent that

[1] See *Commentary on Genesis*, I. 114. All references to Calvin's commentaries are to the edition of the Calvin Translation Society.

tempted Eve, and caused it to speak a human language.[1] Lions, wolves, and tigers meekly entered Noah's ark with lambs.[2] And to pass to the New Testament for another illustration, the words of Mark, that the heavens were opened at the baptism of Jesus, can have, says Calvin, no other meaning than that a cleft was made in the visible heavens so that John could see something beyond the moon and the stars.[3]

This failure to distinguish between prose and poetry, between folk-lore of hoary antiquity and the record of current events, was perhaps made more easy for Calvin by his view of inspiration. This was essentially the old orthodox view, according to which the evangelists were the "clerks" of the Holy Spirit and wrote what he dictated.[4] Even the Roman Pilate in preparing an inscription for the cross wrote what was dictated to him by God, and knew not the meaning of what he wrote.[5] This conception of the origin of sacred writings, which exhibits none of the freedom which often marked Luther's utterances on the subject, would naturally strengthen the tendency to reduce them to one common level. But however it was brought about, Calvin combined with the singular merit of rejecting the time-honored principle of allegory an extreme insistence on the letter, which, at times, made his expositions as worthless as though he had been of the school of Origen.

[1] *Commentary on Genesis*, 1. 139. [2] *Op. cit.*, 1. 269.

[3] See the *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, 1. 203.

[4] See *op. cit.*, 1. 127. [5] See *op. cit.*, 1. 227.

The fact that Calvin often interpreted poetry as though it were prose may be considered as an illustration of a broader fact, viz., a lack of the historical sense which is variously manifested throughout his writings. It is true that his work is worthy of some praise even in this respect. It is to his credit that he passed lightly over the titles of the Psalms, out of which Augustin and a multitude of later writers had juggled impossible meanings,[1] and to his credit also that he inferred from the style and manner of Hebrews that Paul could not have written it.[2] It is likewise to the praise of his exegetical sense that he immensely reduced the number of prophetic psalms. But there are certain other facts which one must not overlook. Is there not manifested a serious lack of historical insight when Calvin declares, for example, that in the Psalms there is *nothing* wanting which relates to the knowledge of eternal salvation,[3] and when he teaches in his *Catechism* that the Decalogue is the rule of life given us of God?[4] Historically considered, the Decalogue is a rule given to the Jews, and from the Christian point of view it is obsolete as a *standard*, its truth being taken up and expressed in an entirely different manner in the revelation of Jesus. Lack of historical appreciation is seen also in the sweeping declaration that the Prophets derived their doctrines from the Law, and were the Law's interpreters.[5] It is now recognized, on the contrary, that both in matter and in manner

[1] See, *e.g.*, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 1. 93.
[2] See *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 35.
[3] See *Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 1, Preface.
[4] See *Tracts*, 2. 56.
[5] See *Commentary on Isaiah*, vol. 1, Preface.

the prophetic message affords a striking contrast to the legislation of the Pentateuch. The Prophets are to be classed with the Gospel rather than with the Law.

To mention yet one more illustration of the point in hand. The Holy Spirit, says Calvin, appears purposely to have regulated the style of the evangelists in such a manner that they all wrote one and the same history, *with the most perfect agreement*, but in different ways.[1] Now without marvelling that it was possible for Calvin to make this statement, — for we must remember the age in which he lived, — we may yet safely affirm that it reveals a lack of critical sense. When an honest man, after a careful study of the first three evangelists, declares that they write "with the most perfect agreement," it is obvious that he does not understand that whereof he speaks. There are facts, and many of them, which he does not see.

We pass now to what we regard as the most conspicuous and fatal defect in Calvin's exegesis, viz., its subjection of Scripture to the authority of the traditional orthodox dogmas. In the details of much of his exegesis, Calvin was independent. He was the most striking contrast which his generation offered to the *catenists* of earlier times; yet in the main features of his theology, he held what the Church of the fourth century had held, and in supporting this out of Scripture he became an arbitrary manipulator of texts. In this he went no further than some of his contemporaries, no further than Athanasius and Augustin had gone. But we are not here concerned to judge the exegesis of Calvin by the standard of the sixteenth century; we are

[1] See *Commentary on a Harmony*, etc., I. 127.

looking at it in the light of the present, for the benefit of the present, and not for the condemnation of the past. In this light we hold that the exegesis of Calvin was fatally defective in that it subordinated Scripture to the dogmas of the Church. As Calvin said of Luther that he was not very desirous to get the sense of the words or the events of the history in his exegesis of Scripture,[1] so we may say of Calvin that he was much *too* desirous to get from Scripture the doctrines he had been taught at Paris or had later learned from the writings of Augustin.

In illustration of this momentous feature of Calvin's exegesis we shall confine ourselves to a single point, viz., to his use of Scripture in support of his doctrine of the person of Christ, and we will consider his argument as set forth in the *Institutes*, the edition of 1559, the maturest product of his thought. In this work he cites and discusses eight passages from the Old Testament and six from the New — as though the Old Testament which merely *foreshadowed* the Messiah were a more important source of the doctrine of Christ's person than the New in which he is *revealed!* He says in regard to the Old Testament proof that he omits "testimonies innumerable," which remark shows that he, as well as Luther, found Christ everywhere in the ancient Scriptures. It is highly significant that his New Testament proof contains no word of Jesus. To the teaching of him who said, "No one knoweth the Son save the Father"; to him who said, "In this place is one greater than the temple," to this one no appeal is made. Calvin finds proof in the ancient story that tells how Jacob wrestled

[1] See Henry, *Das Leben Johann Calvins*, 1. 345.

with an angel, but none in what Jesus Christ said of himself!

It is not necessary to consider in detail all the eight Old Testament passages which Calvin uses to prove that Christ is "eternal God." We will notice only the first four and in the order in which he takes them up. He begins his demonstration with Ps. 45:6.[1] He regards this Psalm as addressed to the Messiah on the ground that the title "God" is never given to a creature without some qualifying word. But this statement is refuted by Ps. 82, which Jesus quoted in John 10:35 in his refutation of the charge of blasphemy. Again, Calvin says of this same verse[2] that "no passage of Scripture erects an eternal throne for a creature," but this passage erects an eternal throne, and therefore the one for whom it is erected *must* be God. This statement of his, however, is clearly refuted by Scripture, for God directed Nathan to say to David, "Thy throne shall be established *for ever*" (2 Sam. 7:16), and of the redeemed it is said, that they shall share the Lord's throne unto *the ages of ages* (Rev. 22:5).

Finally, it is to be noted that Calvin — and how many have followed him to this very day!—snatched a single verse out of an ancient lyric and applied it in a way totally inconsistent with the greater part of the song. If the sixth verse is addressed to the Messiah and proves that he is

[1] See *Institutes*, 1. 13. 9.

[2] "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;
A sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

As this verse is translated by recent O. T. scholars (*e.g.*, Briggs Cheyne, Duhm), the address on which Calvin built disappears entirely.

"eternal God," then to him we must apply also the words:—

> "All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia;
> Out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made thee glad.
> Kings' daughters are among thy honorable women:
> At thy right hand doth stand the queen in gold of Ophir."

And a little later a king's daughter, whose splendid clothing is described, is brought as bride into the king's palace. If all this, according to a natural exegesis, has no application to Jesus, then we should hesitate to find in *any* verse of the Psalm a dogmatic teaching in regard to him.

Calvin's second text is Is. 9:6[1]: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God." Calvin appeals only to the thought of power in the last of these names. "Supreme power," he says, "is the prerogative of God alone, and the fact that such power is ascribed to Christ proves that he is God." Now the interpreter certainly ought to have noticed that the prophet said "mighty," not *almighty*. He ought also to have noticed the next title, "Everlasting *Father*." According to the New Testament, Jesus *cannot* be called the "Everlasting *Father*," and this impossibility ought to have restrained the interpreter from the dangerous business of using poetical language as though it were the language of technical theology.

The third text, Jer. 23:6, is said to be so plain that nothing plainer can be required.[2] Here the desired king is called "Jehovah our righteousness," from which it is inferred that he is "the one eternal God." But to argue

[1] See *Institutes*, 1. 13. 9. [2] *Ibid.*, 1. 13. 9.

thus is certainly to walk in slippery places. Even the translation of the two Hebrew words in question is uncertain. They may be rendered "Jehovah *is* our righteousness,"[1] in which case they are no longer at all applicable to the purpose of Calvin. Moreover, even if we translate with him, we cannot draw his conclusion, for if *Jerusalem* could be called by the name of Jehovah because of his presence in Jerusalem (see Ezek. 48 : 35), surely the Messiah might be called by his name for the same reason.

The last Old Testament text to be considered is Judg. 13 : 2–25, the story of Manoah and his wife who beheld an angel. The interpreter seems to infer that, since the angel disappeared in the flame of the sacrifice which was offered to Jehovah, therefore he himself was Jehovah.[2] But no reason is given why this mode of disappearance proves such a stupendous truth. Surely the fact that the angel vanished in the flame of the offering is no proof that he regarded the offering as made to himself. The angel refused to give his name, but it cannot be thence inferred that his name was Jehovah. It is easy to conceive of other reasons for the desire to keep his name secret.[3]

We turn now to Calvin's New Testament argument.[4] Of his six texts, three should have been thrown out at once as unavailable because of their obscurity.[5] It was as much

[1] So rendered by Driver, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, 1906.

[2] See *Institutes*, 1. 13. 9.

[3] The other O. T. passages used to prove the deity of Christ are Gen. 32:22–32; Zech. 2:3–5; Is. 25:9; Mal. 3. 1.

[4] See *Institutes*, 1. 13. 11.

[5] These are Rom. 9:5, which, grammatically, may refer to God as well as to Christ; 1 Tim. 3:16, where the best Greek text has not the word "God"; and Acts 20:28, which is uncertain in two points.

the duty of an interpreter in the sixteenth century as it is now to be sure that he had clear foundations for great doctrines. Calvin's fourth text was the latter part of 1 John 5:20, "This is the true God and eternal life"; but who is "this"? Modern scholars refer it to God, not to Christ. It seems almost impossible to suppose that Calvin did not see the doubtfulness of the reference to Christ, but if he saw it, it was not right that he should use the passage as he did, and it is safe to say that he would not have so used it had he come to it without a previous and final acceptance of the system of doctrine of the early Church. His two remaining texts are the exclamation of Thomas when he saw the risen Saviour (John 20:28) and Phil. 2:6. That these famous passages appear to give some support to the traditional doctrine cannot be denied; and as we are concerned here simply with the exegesis of Calvin, not at all with the absolute truth or error of his views, we will not enter into a criticism of his use of these texts. Even if one wholly approves of his explanation of them, his biblical argument as a whole, which has been reviewed, abundantly confirms the assertion that his radical failing as an exegete was his subjection of Scripture to the dogmas of the Church.

It may be added at this point that Calvin's use of all these fourteen texts is strictly as texts, as isolated utterances, without the slightest reference to their large background of individual or national thought and life. Paul's word in the letter to the Philippians is not explained out of a comprehensive study of Paul's conception of Jesus, neither are the Old Testament passages interpreted in connection with the

habitual views of the times in which they originated. From the point of view of the present day, this proof-text method is quite unhistorical. It is easy to believe that a broad study of the same fourteen texts would lead to a conclusion quite the opposite of Calvin's.

Finally, there is another point that ought not to be forgotten. As a man trained in law, Calvin knew well the importance of looking at both sides of a case. Any student of common intelligence recognizes that, as regards the establishment of many doctrines of the Church, there *are* two sides to the biblical evidence. An interpreter, therefore, who explains certain selected biblical texts as though they constituted the sum of the evidence, who virtually suppresses more or less evidence that bears on the case, though he may not be dishonest, is surely disqualified for the high business of interpretation. That is what Calvin has done in the case of the doctrine that we chose to illustrate his exegesis. He has presented only one side of the evidence, and has presented it as though it were all. That is an easily besetting sin of every dogmatic interpreter.

It has often been remarked that the Reformers opposed to the infallibility of the Pope the infallibility of the Scriptures,[1] but this statement should be qualified. To the infallibility of the Pope and a corrupted Church they opposed the Scriptures as infallibly interpreted and cast

[1] See, *e.g.*, Pollard in the *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. II, and Guizot, *St. Louis and Calvin*, p. 182. Guizot says, "Calvin's special work was to replace the authority and infallibility of the Church by the authority and infallibility of the sacred monument of divine revelation, *i.e.* to put the Bible in the place of the Pope."

into a system of doctrine by the early Church. They never trusted themselves wholly to the Scriptures. They used it triumphantly against the abuses of the later Church, but always read it in the light of the theology of the early Church.[1] Of this exegetical error Calvin's writings afford by far the most disastrous example of the last three centuries.

We have already had occasion to notice that Humanism in England at the beginning of the sixteenth century was distinctly religious. It gave promise of a new and better interpretation of Scripture by English scholars. This promise, however, was not signally fulfilled. For though the sixteenth century saw an extensive transformation of the Church in England in the rise of Puritanism, though it saw there the first circulation of the Bible in the English tongue, and produced a number of eminent churchmen, it produced no original interpreter. There was no strong inner force in the English Church proceeding from a fresh contact with the truth of Scripture. Its interpretation of the Bible came from the continent. Tyndale (1484–1536) was a Wittenberg student. The Matthews Bible (1537) of John Rogers based its *Prefaces* and *Notes* on those of Luther's Bible.[2] Theologians were sought and received

[1] The testimony of Latimer († 1555) shows that an Englishman could be a reformer without a consciousness of any break with the patristic exposition of Scripture. He said, "I have never preached anything contrary to the truth, or contrary to the decrees of the Fathers, nor, as far as I know, contrary to the Catholic faith." Quoted by Tulloch, *Luther and other Leaders of the Reformation.*

[2] See Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*, 1. 117.

from abroad.[1] The most popular commentaries, general theological works, and even homilies were by foreign writers.[2] True, the religious and political conditions under Henry VIII and Mary were more favorable to the development of martyrs than of scholars, and then the immense fame and authority of Luther and Calvin as theological teachers might, for a time, check rather than stimulate original exegetical work; but however one may explain the fact, its existence is obvious, and we shall not stop long for its illustration. We glance only at some of the leading biblical writers. Myles Coverdale (1488–1569), whose translation of the Bible was published in 1535, only a year later than the completed translation of Luther, and who, like Luther, prized God's "unoutspeakable gift," [3] gave an exposition of Ps. 23 in which the simple sense is well-nigh lost. Thus the shepherd of the Psalm is Christ, and the shepherd's voice is the holy Gospel. David is said to give thanks to God in this Psalm for his principal benefit, even the preaching of his dear and holy word.[4] Cranmer (1489–1556), whom his seventeenth century biographer calls a "great scripturist," [5] was such in an indirect rather than

[1] As Butzer and Fagius who were called to Cambridge, Peter Martyr, Ochino, and others. Melanchthon was four times invited to England, but always declined. See Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1. 600.

[2] On Calvin's influence in England, see Fisher, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 372; Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1. 608. Strype, *Annals of the Reformation*, 2. 2, regarding Bullinger's *Decades*, translated in 1577.

[3] See *Works*, edited by George Pearson, p. 298.

[4] See *op. cit.*, p. 282 f. Coverdale translated the *fides antiquissima et vera religio* of Bullinger, which did not give him a very high ideal of interpretation.

[5] See Strype's *Memorials of Cranmer*, 1. 637.

direct manner, for though he labored with success for the publication of the Bible in English and for its more thorough study at the universities, he made no contribution to the exposition of Scripture.[1] The first valuable discussion and defence of the view that the Bible is to be taken according to its literal sense, as well as the first elaborate argument in support of the right of private judgment, is that of William Whitaker (1547–1595), who, it may also be noted, put a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek next to prayer, as a means of ascertaining the sense of Scripture.[2] William Tyndale's great service for the Church, in which D'Aubigné sees the conquest of England by the Reformation,[3] was of significance for the history of interpretation only in a secondary sense. By his translation of the Bible into English (N. T. in 1526) it may well be that he aided many a ploughboy to a better knowledge of Scripture than was possessed by some of the bishops; and his version with others of the sixteenth century helped to prepare the way for an advance in biblical exposition. His desire to deliver people from false interpretations of Scripture by putting the text itself into their hands was a desire that undoubtedly had a large measure of fulfilment in his own time. Tyndale's own exposition, however, reproduced the defects

[1] He was decidedly *not* progressive as a "scripturist." He never could break with the ancient doctors. See letter to Vadian, *Original Letters relative to the English Reformation*, edited by Hastings Robinson.

[2] See *A Disputation on Holy Scripture against the Papists*, etc., translated and edited for the Parker Society by William Fitzgerald, pp. 408, 447–466, 467–473.

[3] See *The Reformation in Europe in the Time of Calvin*, 5. 259.

of Luther's method.[1] He warns his readers to beware of subtle allegories. "Scripture," he says, "has but one simple literal sense whose light the owls (*i.e.* the papists) cannot abide."[2] Tyndale was also as genuinely opposed to the scholastic handling of the Bible as was Luther or Calvin. Every priest, he said, had his own doctor, and to uphold him he corrupted the Scriptures. "Of what text thou provest hell, will another prove purgatory, another *limbo patrum*, another the assumption of our lady, and another shall prove of the same text that an ape hath a tail."[3] But, on the other hand, in sharp contrast with his theoretical rejection of allegory, he found Christ described in the ceremonies, riddles, and parables of the Old Testament,[4] being fully persuaded that God showed Moses the secrets of Christ and the very manner of his death; he regarded the Epistle to the Romans as "an epitome of the whole learning of Christ's gospel"; and his exposition was never independent of "the common articles of faith," *i.e.* the traditional orthodox doctrines of the Church.[5] Thus Tyndale as an expositor stood under the influence of Luther, and his example was typical. English Christians of his century went to school to foreign teachers.

We may now bring the present chapter to a close with a swift glance at the salient points with which it has been concerned. The more vital exegesis of the fifteenth and six-

[1] How deeply he was influenced by Luther may be seen from his *Prologue to Romans*. See *Doctrinal Treatises*, edited for the Parker Society by Henry Walter.

[2] See *op. cit.*, p. 393.

[3] See *op. cit.*, p. 158.

[4] See *op. cit.*, p. 144.

[5] See *op. cit.*, pp. 167, 422, 508.

teenth centuries had its rise in a profound spiritual reaction against the barrenness and inefficiency of Scholasticism, and more especially against the corruption of the Church. Contemporary with this spiritual reaction, and promoting it, came Humanism, from which exegesis, particularly that of the sixteenth century, received a new element. Reaction against Scholasticism gave new prominence to the early interpreters, — the Fathers of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, — but Humanism with its grammars and lexicons introduced a force which was destined ultimately to carry exegesis to a higher level than that of the Fathers. This new method of exegesis, though very imperfectly applied in the sixteenth century, and the popularization of the Bible through numerous translations, were those contributions of the Reformers to a better interpretation of Scripture, which possessed great and abiding significance.

CHAPTER IX

INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

WHILE no clear line marks off the exegesis of the seventeenth century from that of the Reformation, or, on the other hand, from that of the eighteenth century, and while also there is no clear boundary separating the exegesis of those two centuries from that of the nineteenth, yet the exegesis of that period from 1600 to 1800, when one has regard to its main features, does not allow itself to be mistaken for that of the sixteenth century, still less is it to be confused with that which has been developed in more recent times.

It may tend to clearness of apprehension of the exegetical movement throughout this period, if at the outset we glance at two facts which in a more or less fundamental manner determined the direction of the movement and affected its results.

The Reformation had two centres, Wittenberg and Geneva, which, though not far apart on the map of Europe, were so widely sundered in some matters of theology that the age of Luther and Calvin, in which war had been waged against the errors and abuses of the Catholic Church, was followed by a century of more bitter and far more des-

picable warfare between the divisions of the Protestant Church. This began even before the Fathers had fallen asleep. One of the reasons which Melanchthon gave why he would welcome death was that he should thereby be set free from the rancor of theologians. The bitter feeling between Lutherans and Calvinists increased, until at the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War (1618) there were Lutherans who would rather come under Catholic rule than have the poison of Calvinism disseminated among them.[1]

Hardly less intense was the spirit of intolerance in the Netherlands at this time between Calvinists and Arminians, when Grotius was sentenced to imprisonment for life, or in France, where Protestantism was finally crushed and exterminated by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685; and across the Channel the conflict between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy from James I to Charles II absorbed the interest of theologians, and even demanded the sacrifice of not a few lives. We cannot doubt that the theological strife and intolerance which prevailed in the seventeenth century was a serious check on the normal development of biblical studies.[2]

The condition of Catholic lands was no less discouraging to religious scholarship. The Decrees of the Council of Trent (1546) had made it unsafe for any one to study the Bible except by the light of Church doctrine, and thus had erected an impassable barrier against the spirit of the Renaissance.

[1] Comp. Planck, *Geschichte der Prot. Theologie von der Konkordienformel*, etc., p. 46.

[2] Comp. Meyer, *Geschichte der Schrifterklärung*, 4. 3.

A second fact that affected interpretation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the rise of modern philosophy and the consequent abandonment of Aristotelianism and the Ptolemaic system. Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake in Rome in 1600. Francis Bacon died in 1526, Kepler in 1630, Galileo in 1642, Descartes in 1650, and Spinoza in 1677. Bruno, Kepler, and Galileo, building on the work of Copernicus, established a new conception of the universe, to which Newton somewhat later made his contribution. The earth was shown to be a globe revolving on its axis and revolving around the sun, and not the stable and important centre of the universe which it had long been supposed to be. Bruno held as a philosopher what Galileo with his telescope helped to demonstrate, viz., that the universe is endless. Bruno laid down the principle, now widely accepted, that the Scriptures do not discuss natural phenomena from the scientific point of view; that their aim is wholly practical, and that therefore they were obliged to use popular speech.

Lord Bacon, by his doctrine of the true method of knowledge, contributed to the ultimate advance of scientific interpretation of the Bible, though in his own attitude toward the Scriptures and his attempts at interpretation, he did extreme violence to his own theory, showing a true mediæval willingness to subject reason to the authority of tradition.[1]

That the philosophy of Descartes had immediate bear-

[1] See, *e.g.*, *The Advancement of Learning*, Book I: "We are to believe God's word, though we find a reluctation in our reason"; and "I do much condemn that interpretation of Scripture which is only after the manner as men use to interpret a profane book."

ings on theology, and therefore on the current interpretation of Scripture, is manifest in the fact that both Protestants and Roman Catholics were largely hostile to it. Within a few years of his death it was forbidden to teach his doctrines in France; in Holland, also, no follower of his could teach or preach. Nor was the fear of his influence on the Church groundless, for by its exaltation of reason his philosophy was inimical to tradition, and by its appreciation of doubt as a factor in the attainment of truth, it certainly was hostile to the doctrine of the supreme authority of the Church.[1]

Spinoza's thought also had immediate bearings on religion and the Bible. Some of his criticisms we shall consider in another connection. Here we refer to his general significance for interpretation, which consisted in his advocacy of absolute freedom of religious belief, and in his doctrine that God is the immanent, not the external, cause of all things.[2]

Locke and Hume, not to mention other successors of Descartes and Spinoza, influenced the interpretation of Scripture, not simply in the general way of stimulating theological thought, but also by promoting a rational method of dealing with all religious questions.

With this preliminary glance at two facts which, in widely different ways, influenced interpretation in the period with which we are dealing, we come now to a closer view of our subject. We shall consider first the general exegesis of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the normal type to be found among the leading divines and scholars,

[1] See Höffding, *History of Modern Philosophy*, I. 242–243.

[2] See Höffding, *op. cit.*, I. 311, 314–315.

and then study those few thinkers who departed from the normal type and whose labors marked the way of true progress.

There were, indeed, departures from the normal type of exegesis in those centuries which did *not* contribute to the progress of the science of interpretation. Such was the departure of George Fox (1624–1690), who, in the second half of the seventeenth century, founded the Quaker communion, and the departure of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), who, about a century later, founded the Church of the New Jerusalem. Fox went to the extreme of literalism, and Swedenborg to the extreme of mystical interpretation. Both appealed to an inner light or revelation in support of their interpretations; both ignored grammar and lexicon. Fox tells us that he dissuaded a man from founding a college in which men were to be fitted for the ministry by the study of Greek and Hebrew, and that he dissuaded him by showing from the Apocalypse that it is the "beast" and the "harlot" who have power over languages![1] In the case of his refusing to take an oath, his exegesis seems to have put his adversaries to confusion, though it did not keep him out of prison. When asked to kiss the Bible and make oath, he opened to Ps. 2 and Matt. 5. We are bidden, he said, to kiss the Son, and the Son says, "Swear not at all." How comes it then that this *book* is at liberty among you, while one who keeps it is thrown into prison?[2]

Swedenborg held that the word in every part of its literal sense contains two interior senses, one called

[1] See Fox's *Journal*, 1. 351.

[2] See *Journal*, 2. 57.

spiritual and the other celestial, and that because of these interior senses — not because of the literal — the word is holy in every syllable.[1]

The movements of Fox and Swedenborg may illustrate the departures from the normal type of exegesis in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which did *not* promote exegetical science.[2] Looking now at that normal type of exegesis, we observe that it is not a new phenomenon. We have met it before, notably in the writings of Calvin. Here and there in the hands of some exceptionally strong character, a Milton or an Edwards, it may take on this or that new feature, but still it persists essentially unchanged. The good elements of sixteenth century interpretation are rarely improved in the two following centuries; the bad are sometimes more pronounced. It is to be said to the credit of the period under consideration that its normal type of exegesis regards the literal sense of the text. The words of Richard Hooker (1553–1600) have a wide application throughout the period. "I hold it," he says, "for a most infallible rule in exposition of Sacred Scriptures that when a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this deluding art which changeth the meaning of words as alchymy doth or would do the substance of metals, making of anything what it listeth, and bringeth in

[1] See *The True Christian Religion*, pp. 251, 318.

[2] The Quietism of Molinos (1627–1696) and Madame Guyon (1648–1717) affords a similar departure, but it did not issue in an organization. The exegesis of the Quietists was like that of the Mystics of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

the end all truth to nothing."[1] In general, the example of Calvin in rejecting allegorical interpretation was followed by the leading divines and scholars of the next two centuries. There were, however, some conspicuous exceptions to this rule. Thus Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) regarded the Old Testament as written in a cipher, which Jesus and his apostles were the first to unlock.[2] The law, sacrifices, and the kingdom are regarded by him as only figures. If one takes them as realities, they are at once seen to be full of contradictions, and meaningless.

With Pascal we may associate, in this point, the greatest of the theologians of the following century, Jonathan Edwards (1693–1758). There are a multitude of things in the Old Testament, he says, which the Church did not then understand, but which were reserved to be unfolded in the Christian Church, such as most of their types and shadows and prophecies, which make up the greatest part of the Old Testament.[3] The Scriptures were "made mystical," he says, that God's people might have "exercise for their pious wisdom and study."[4] What hidden meaning the "pious wisdom" of Edwards was able to bring forth out of the Old Testament, the following instances of his exegesis will sufficiently suggest. We read in Gen. 5:29 that

[1] See *Works of Richard Hooker*, edited by Isaac Walton, 2. 7–8.

[2] See Pascal, *Thoughts, Letters, and Opuscules*, translated by O. W. Wight, p. 303.

[3] See *The Works of President Edwards*, edition of 1817, 8. 180.

[4] Comp. Owen, *The Glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ*, pp. 138–142: "The meanest believer may now find out more of the work of Christ in the types of the Old Testament than any prophets or wise men could have done of old."

Lamech, at the birth of a son, gave him the name Noah, saying, "This same shall comfort us for our work and for the toil of our hands." How was this done? First, says Edwards, he comforted them as the ancestor of the Redeemer; second, as the inventor of wine, which was a remarkable type of the blood of Christ and his spiritual benefits; third, as one who had leave to eat flesh — another type of our feeding on Christ and having spiritual life and refreshment in him; and fourth, Noah comforted his parents by means of the promise which God gave to him, that there should be no more a flood upon the earth.[1]

Again, Edwards regarded the book of Esther as "very probably a history that is a shadow of Gospel things and times." Thus the great feast that Ahasuerus made is the Gospel feast. Vashti is the Church of the Jews, Esther the later Church, Mordecai the Gospel ministry, and Haman is, of course, Antichrist! Thus Edwards went with Rabanus Maurus and other mediæval writers to an extreme in reading the New Testament into the Old.[2]

Edwards treated the New Testament also as having a mystical sense. Thus, in speaking of the genealogy in Matt. 1, he observes that the only women mentioned as belonging to the ancestry of Jesus were harlots or Gentiles. These are taken notice of, he says, because Christ's descending from several harlots or Gentiles intimates unto us that all

[1] See *op. cit.*, 8. 51.

[2] Comp. also John Owen, *The Glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ*, pp. 461–462; John Wesley (1703–1791), who declares that there is "no contrariety at all between the law and the Gospel" (*Works*, edition of 1839, 1. 223); Jonathan Edwards, *op. cit.*, 8. 21 f.; and Isaac Barrow, *Works*, 6. 473 f.

who are saved by Christ were sinners.[1] Thus the construction of a genealogy of Jesus had in view a point of Christian teaching, and indeed a point which no Christian ever called in question. It is not quite clear how the fact that some of the ancestors of Jesus were harlots or Gentiles should intimate that *all* who were to be saved by him were sinners. With as good ground might one argue that the fact that most of the ancestors of Jesus were Jews, not Gentiles, and law-abiding people, not harlots, intimated that those who were to be saved by him were *not* sinners. The truth is that neither conclusion is of the slightest value.

But Pascal and Edwards, in the point under consideration, are exceptions to the rule. Allegorical interpretation, even of the Old Testament, received such a blow in the sixteenth century that in the next two centuries it was rarely conspicuous in men of recognized ability. Indeed, the aversion to it was so deep-seated that it appears to have hindered the recognition of the true nature of some portions of Scripture, as, for example, the early chapters of Genesis.

It was natural that, with the rejection of allegorical interpretation, the view was maintained that the Scriptures are intelligible. The men who drew up the Westminster *Confession of Faith* (1647) held the view of the Antiochian school in the early Church, that all necessary truths of Scripture are plain, and with this they held the principle that the Scripture itself is the only infallible rule for the interpretation of Scripture.[2] The earnestness with which these assertions were made and defended was due to the

[1] See *op. cit.*, 8. 285.

[2] See *Confession*, chapter i, secs. vii and ix.

reaction from the dominion of the Catholic doctrine of the necessity both of tradition and of the Church to any trustworthy interpretation of Scripture. In view of that intellectually destructive dominion, this earnestness was fully justified. Moreover, there are probably few scholars at the present day who will not agree with the declaration of John Milton, who, in refuting the claim that the Scriptures are obscure and need the interpretation of the Fathers, said that the Scriptures, even at their worst, are plainer than the Fathers.[1]

But while the doctrine of the intelligibility of Scripture marks an advance upon the Roman Catholic position, the language of the Westminster Symbol, that Scripture is an *infallible* rule for the interpretation of Scripture, must now be regarded as an extreme and unwarrantable overstatement of an important exegetical principle.

The relation of the normal type of exegesis in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the inspiration of Scripture may be seen at its best in the Symbol which has just been mentioned, and we may well pause for a moment to consider, not the doctrine itself, but its alleged Scripture foundation. That the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures were "immediately inspired" by God was inferred as certain from four New Testament passages.[2] In the first of these (Luke 16:29, 31) Abraham is represented by Jesus as

[1] See his Tract *Of Reform in England.*

[2] See chapter i, sec. 2. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1. 767, says of the entire chapter regarding the Scriptures: "No other Protestant symbol has such a clear, judicious, concise, and exhaustive statement of this fundamental article of Protestantism."

telling the spirit of the rich man that his brothers on earth have Moses and the prophets. If they give heed to these teachers, they will escape the place of torment. In the second passage (Eph. 2:20) the Ephesian Christians are said by Paul to be built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus being the chief corner-stone. The third passage is that one in Revelation (22:18–19) which gave so great offence to Martin Luther, viz., those closing words which threaten grievous woes to any one who should add aught to the book or take aught from it. The fourth and last is Paul's well-known word to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:16) about the profitableness of "inspired" Scripture. Now of these four passages, the first obviously has to do only with the practical value of the Old Testament: Moses and the prophets teach the duty of mercy. The second affirms the religious value of the Old Testament and the New, which value is most manifest in Jesus. The third applies to the Apocalypse only, and simply affirms its importance. Thus three of the four alleged proofs of "immediate inspiration by God" do not at all concern inspiration, immediate or mediate. They merely affirm the *value* of Scripture, but leave quite untouched the peculiar *mode* of its origin. There is one passage out of the four, or rather one single word in one passage, which, in a general manner, associates Scripture with God.[1]

What follows in reference to the exegesis of the Westminster divines? This, at least, that they, like many theo-

[1] Compare the Westminster support of the point that the Scriptures have been "kept pure in all ages." Matt. 5:18.

logians of other times, when they had a doctrine to establish out of Scripture, had little difficulty in establishing it. The exegetical support of their view of inspiration suggests that they proceeded from without inward rather than from within outward. They *appealed* to Scripture rather than *listened* to it.

We pass on to note that the normal type of exegesis in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was characterized by great regard for the doctrines of the early Church. It was true in this respect to the example of the Reformers. It proceeded from the Fathers to the Bible, not to the Bible independently of the Fathers. The main doctrines of the third and fourth centuries were held much as axiomatic truths. It was taken for granted that they were fundamental in the Scriptures. Therefore the Bible was not searched for its teaching, but rather for proof of what was *assumed* to be its teaching. Take as an illustration of this point, the paraphrase which Joseph Hall (1574–1656) wrote on the "hard texts" of Scripture. He counted Rom. 1:3 such a text, in which the apostle says that the promise of God in the Prophets concerned his son, "who was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh." The explanatory paraphrase runs as follows: "Concerning his only and eternal Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who, taking upon him our nature, was miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost, and took flesh of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was of the seed of David."[1] Thus the paraphrase neatly superimposes the current orthodoxy upon the text, and makes it indeed a "*hard* text."

[1] See Joseph Hall, *Works*, Oxford, 1837–1839, 4. 288.

Thomas Goodwin (1600–1679), speaking of the blessing of Aaron in Num. 6, comments as follows on the fact that Jehovah is there thrice mentioned: "the three Persons and their blessing of us are intended, though not explicitly mentioned." [1]

John Milton, though more independent than most theologians of his century, found the doctrine of the Trinity in Gen. 1, and held that the question of man's redemption was discussed by the Father and the Son before the fall of Adam.[2]

Lord Bacon remarks in *The Advancement of Learning:* "If the choice observations upon texts of Scripture which have been made dispersedly in sermons in the past forty years had been set down in continuance, it had been the best work in divinity which had been written since the apostles' times." But there seems to be large ground for modifying this opinion and saying that such a work, though expanded to cover also the entire century after Bacon's death, would remind us less often of the apostolic writings than of those which were produced in the third and fourth centuries. Its "choice observations" upon texts of Scripture are very often too theological to remind us at all of the writings of apostles, and they as often lack that freedom which so largely characterized the first age of the Church.

Under the normal type of exegesis of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we must place the first Christian trea-

[1] See Goodwin, *Works*, edition of 1861, 1. 20.

[2] See *Paradise Lost*, Book iii and vii. In his Tract on *Church Doctrine*, Milton held the existence of the Son before the world, but denied that the Scriptures represent this existence as eternal. Illustrations of this point might be greatly multiplied from every branch of the Church.

tise on the chronology of the Bible and the first English *Life of Christ.* Archbishop Ussher (1581–1656) was one of the most learned men of his time in England, and Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667), "the Shakespeare of English prose," one of the most interesting and influential men in the Anglican Church. And yet Ussher's chronology, which has been the standard for two and a half centuries, and which was not dropped from the pages of the Bible itself until the new edition of 1881, soberly put the creation of the world in the night before the twenty-third of October 4004 B.C., and treated the poetical stories of Genesis, in some of which men are reputed to have lived eight and nine centuries, as though they were statistical tables compiled by contemporary experts.[1]

In Jeremy Taylor's *Life of Christ*[2] the normal type of exegesis of the period which we are considering is somewhat exaggerated. He magnified the miraculous element almost like a mediæval legend-writer. Thus the story of the star that appeared to the Magi becomes a prodigy of the first order, an angel in a pillar of fire, under the semblance of a star, which stood when the Magi stood and went forward when they were able.[3] Taylor accepted the most extravagant fictions of antiquity, as that of Gregory Turonensis, who relates that the creek of the river in which Jesus was baptized was ever after endued with healing power to cure leprosy.[4] He also dealt with the details of the Gospel regarding the childhood of Jesus in such a manner as

[1] See *Annales Vet. Test.* in vol. 8 of his *Works*, p. 13.
[2] See vol. 2 of Heber's edition of Taylor's *Works*.
[3] See *op. cit.*, pp. 47–48.
[4] See *op. cit.*, p. 185.

utterly to destroy its naturalness. Thus he says that Mary, when searching for Jesus, went into the temple to pray, and there found her twelve years' old boy "discoursing up to the height of a prophet, with the clearness of an angel and the infallibility of inspiration." The strength of his discourse was "the strength of argument, and science of the highest mysteries of religion, and secret of philosophy." [1] This language may now move a smile, but it is only a rhetorical expression of the view that was commonly read into Luke's story of Jesus among the rabbis in the temple, and which is still to be met with even in so-called exegetical works.

Thus far we have spoken of the normal type of exegesis in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and we now turn to the more important task of estimating the work of those few men who, not content with the principles and results of exegesis in the past, had the vision to discover and the courage to enter new fields of research, and whose labors laid the secure foundations of yet more fruitful and more scientific investigations in subsequent times.

Of seventeenth-century scholars, or scholars whose chief work fell in that century, we shall speak of six who, in very unlike ways and with widely different degrees of success, contributed to the advance of interpretation. Of these six men, Grotius (1583–1645) and Cocceius (1603–1669) were Dutch; Spinoza (1632–1677), a Jew who revered Jesus; Simon (1638–1712), a Frenchman and Roman Catholic; John Lightfoot (1602–1675) and Richard Bentley (1662–1742), English and of the English Church.

[1] See *op. cit.*, p. 142.

Three were preëminent as critics—Spinoza, Simon, and Bentley. Spinoza, in his relation to the Bible, was a philosophical critic; Simon and Bentley critics of the historical and literary types. Of the others, Grotius is the best representative of the seventeenth-century annotator, Coccеius was the precursor of the discipline of biblical theology, and Lightfoot[1] one of the pioneers in the department of rabbinical learning.

Grotius laid the foundation for his exegetical studies in a critical knowledge of the classics, and was a humanist somewhat of the Erasmian type.[2] We have introduced him as the best representative of the seventeenth-century biblical annotator, but it ought to be said that he also served the cause of exegesis as a noble peace-maker between the Protestants and the Catholics. He opposed, both as a Christian and a scholar, the view which had been widely held since Luther's time that the Pope was Antichrist.[3]

The annotations of Grotius on the Gospels and Acts[4] had value largely because they turned from the dogmatic type of exegesis toward the historical. The work is cumbrous and diffuse like the expository sermons of contem-

[1] Johannes Buxtorf (1564–1629) preceded Lightfoot and was more famous as a rabbinic scholar. His service, however, was in the department of philology. See Keil, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, translated by Douglas, 2. 168–177.

[2] See *Vie de Grotius* by De Burigny, 1. 33.

[3] See De Burigny, *op. cit.*, 2. 166.

[4] *Annotationes in quatuor Evangelia et Acta Apostolorum*, London, 1679. Simon says of this work: "Il surpasse les autres commentaires qui ont écrit avant lui sur le N.T." See *Hist. Crit. des principaux Commentateurs du N.T.*, p. 803.

porary Puritan divines.[1] It is adapted only to the learned. It explains and illustrates many points that appear to us to need no explanation, but does not touch the great critical problems of the text. Yet it aims throughout to discover the meaning of the sacred writers, and collects from Jewish and especially from classical sources a large amount of illustrative material.

The contribution of Lightfoot to the interpretation of Scripture, which was supplemented in the next century by the labors of Schöttgen (1687–1751),[2] was the opening of the hitherto little-known rabbinical writings. As Reuchlin in the preceding century had made the grammars of the mediæval Jewish grammarians the basis of his own Hebrew text-books, so Lightfoot laid the rabbis of all the past ages under contribution for the explanation of the sacred text.

As a commentator, Lightfoot did not rise above the general type which we have found in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His exegesis is arbitrary in method, and everywhere loyal to the traditional theology. Thus in the word *Elohim* in Gen. 1 : 1 he finds the Trinity so clearly expressed that he does not stop for a word in justification of the view.[3] Again, when speaking of the appearance of three men to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre, his comment is that "the three Persons of the Trinity dine

[1] Thus Thomas Goodwin published a volume of 564 pages on Eph. 1, and Sibbes a volume of above 500 pages on 2 Cor. 1.

[2] Schöttgen's work, *Horae Hebr. et Talmud.*, published in 1733, represents the same dogmatic tendency that we see in Lightfoot. See, *e.g.*, pp. 916 f.

[3] See *The Works of the Rev. and Learned John Lightfoot, D.D.*, London, 1684, 1. 1.

with Abraham, and foretell the birth of Isaac." [1] His dealing with the New Testament was equally notable. Thus in Luke's statement in the prologue of his Gospel that he had traced the course of all things accurately *from the first* (ἄνωθεν), Lightfoot takes this word ἄνωθεν as meaning *from above*, and thus makes Luke claim divine inspiration for his narrative, which his predecessors are assumed to have lacked![2]

The biblical chronology of Lightfoot, like that of Ussher, was definite on points which have since been regarded as unknown, if not unknowable. Thus, for example, it is said that Adam's fall was about noon of the day on which he was created; John the Baptist was born in the same month in which Abraham was circumcised; and Jesus was baptized in September.[3]

While Lightfoot was laboriously searching the rabbinical writings for passages that might elucidate the biblical text, the Jew Spinoza was rendering a very different service by an independent study of the text itself. Of all the writers of the seventeenth century who gave attention to the interpretation of Scripture, Spinoza is the one whose attitude is most thoroughly modern. His biblical criticism, however, seems to be generally unknown,[4] and for that reason it will be somewhat more fully noticed in this place.

The true method of interpreting Scripture is, according to

[1] See *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[2] See *op. cit.*, p. 201.

[3] See *op. cit.*, pp. 2, 13, 208.

[4] Reuss, *History of the New Testament*, 2. 584, barely touches the general significance of Spinoza, but see James Martineau, *A Study of Spinoza*, 1883, p. 367.

Spinoza, perfectly harmonious with the method of interpreting Nature. As the naturalist studies the phenomena of Nature, seeking to make a faithful history of them, so the biblical interpreter must first get a fund of data regarding any writing, — its author, date, occasion, aim, and so forth, — from which data he may at last deduce the thought of the author. He must note its leading features, and be able to take a view of it as a whole. And all the time when he is doing this, he is to remember that what he seeks is the *sense* of the words, not the truth of their statement, which are two wholly different things.[1]

As to the divinity of Scripture, Spinoza holds that the only way of proving it is by showing that Scripture teaches true virtue.[2]

It is plain from what has been said that Spinoza relied upon reason for the understanding of Scripture. To the claim that Scripture is to be interpreted only by means of supernatural illumination, he replied that such illumination is given only to the faithful, while the words of the prophets were spoken to unbelievers and were spoken with the manifest expectation that they would be understood.

Spinoza's view of prophecy marked a definite advance. He notes that the Jews in Old Testament times never mentioned second causes, but attributed their gains, their desires, and their conceptions immediately to God. Hence, he says, it is not necessary, when Scripture affirms that God spoke, to think that supernatural knowledge was

[1] See *Oeuvres de Spinoza*, translated by Emile Saisset, 2. 125 f.
[2] See *op. cit.*, p. 128.

always given to the prophet.[1] The fact of divine revelation must be expressly indicated. Spinoza does not deny that the Old Testament contains such revelation. He thinks that God spoke to Moses in a veritable voice, and that Jesus received revelations immediately, without words or images.

As to the statement that the Spirit of God was in the prophets, Spinoza holds that it signifies their exceptional virtue (*virtutem singularem*), that they practised piety with superior constancy (*pietatem eximia animi constantia colebant*), and, finally, that they perceived the mind or thought of God (*mentem sive sententiam dei*).[2] They differed among themselves, and God suited his revelations to their varying intelligence and opinions, perhaps also to their varying powers of imagination, for Spinoza held that superior power of imagination characterized the prophets. Since, then, the prophets received revelations according to their intelligence and opinions, we are called to believe them only in those things which are the object and ground of their revelation.[3] As to all other points each is free to believe what he pleases.

Spinoza lays great stress on the importance of distinguishing between faith and philosophy, or religion and theology. He declares that this was the principal object of his *Tractatus Theologico-politicus*. He insists that the sole end of Scripture is to teach obedience. It does not contain sublime speculations and philosophical questions,

[1] See *op. cit.*, pp. 18 f.

[2] See *op. cit.*, p. 32.

[3] *Quod finis et substantia est revelationis.* See the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, edition of Van Vloten and Laud, 1. 1.

but only the simplest things which any one can understand. In this point he undoubtedly went too far. Such books as Job, Ecclesiastes, and Second Isaiah contain both philosophical questions and sublime speculations, but the distinction is in general a true one and of immeasurable significance.[1]

In the department of literary criticism of the Old Testament Spinoza's most important departure from orthodox teaching was his attributing to Ezra the composition of the books from Genesis to 2 Kings. He held the unique dignity of Moses, yet did not regard him as the author of the Pentateuch. In this he anticipated the position of modern scholarship, but his theory of the composition of the first twelve books of the Bible has, of course, not found acceptance.

We pass from Spinoza, who lived in retirement in the Hague, to Cocceius, a lecturer at Leyden. In his twelve folio volumes there is little which is of interest at the present day, and yet he deserves honorable mention among those who promoted biblical science in the seventeenth century. For he at least *conceived* of a theology which should be legitimately derived from the Bible, and be an orderly historical presentation of the content of Scripture.[2] A characteristic illustration of his use of the Bible is afforded by the sermon on the *Ways of God* which he preached in February, 1669, on the occasion of his laying

[1] See *op. cit.*, p. 222.

[2] That Cocceius saw something of the truth of the historical method of exegesis is further shown by the fact that his pupil Vitringa (1659–1722) is regarded by Delitzsch as the founder of the historical interpretation of Isaiah; see *Kommentar über Jesaia*, p. xxxiii.

down the office of rector of the university. In this sermon, which is not longer than those of our day, he quotes or alludes to three hundred and seven passages of Scripture from forty-five different books. Manifestly he believed that the ways of God are to be authoritatively understood from the words of God.[1] And yet Cocceius did not grasp the principle of development in Scripture, and his exegetical method was mainly that of his times. He often violated his good principle that interpretation should bring out something from the Scriptures, not put something into them.[2] It was said that he found Christ everywhere in the Old Testament, while Arminius found him nowhere,[3] and Reuss is of the opinion that his exegetical method might be fitly characterized by the words "verba sacrae Scripturae significant id omne quod possunt."[4]

Richard Simon, the fifth of our seventeenth-century leaders in the general field of biblical science, was not himself an interpreter of Scripture nor a writer on the theory of interpretation. He rendered his service as a critical historian of the Bible.

To a reader of the present day it appears somewhat remarkable that the first edition of Simon's work on the Old Testament was destroyed in Paris as heretical, with the exception of a few copies, and that when he published a second edition, it was at Rotterdam and anonymously.[5]

[1] See *Opera*, 7. 147.

[2] See *Opera*, 7. 4: "Interpretatio Scripturarum est efferenda ex Scripturis, non inferenda in illas."

[3] See Fisher, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 439.

[4] See *History of the New Testament*, p. 577.

[5] *Histoire critique du V. T.*, Rotterdam, 1685.

The author, it is true, held that only a part of the Pentateuch was written by Moses, but he regarded the rest as being of equal authority because written by those whom Moses had appointed for this very work. These and other similar public writers (*écrivains publics*), whom, it is assumed, the Israelitish State never lacked, are thought to have been inspired no less truly than were the prophets or Moses himself.

The New Testament, says Simon, recognizes nothing in all Scripture which is not prophetic and truly inspired.[1]

Moreover, Simon shared the Roman Catholic view of the importance of tradition. He says that if the truth of religion were not deposited in the Church (*i.e.* if there were not a tradition supplementing the Scriptures), it would be in vain to seek it now in books which have been subjected to so much change. He emphatically rejects the Protestant view that Scripture is clear in itself. There is almost nothing in religion, he says, of which one can be certain unless one associates *tradition* with Scripture.

The views just noticed constitute perhaps the weakest part of Simon's critical position. A permanent order of *écrivains publics* in Old Testament times is unknown. The idea that tradition is necessary to certainty in religion because the biblical writings have been subject to great changes in the course of time is open to serious objection on two sides. It implies, in the first place, that the central purport of Scripture is obscure, a view against which the character and words of Jesus, to mention only a single point, must ever stand as an unanswerable argument; and

[1] See *op. cit.*, Preface.

it assumes also that the Church has always had an understanding and a spirit capable of testing and conserving the revelations of God — an assumption too deeply discredited by Christian history to be worthy of consideration.

The work of Simon was published between 1685 and 1693. Six years later (1699) Richard Bentley published his *Dissertations upon the Epistles of Phalaris*, a work which has been called "the most valuable of all critical essays." Its value is not due at all to the importance of its subject. Neither Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum in Sicily in the sixth century B.C., nor the epistles falsely ascribed to him, have any particular historical significance. Nor does the value of Bentley's dissertation consist in the enunciation of any formal principles of literary criticism, which can be applied to the criticism of biblical writings. Its significance lies in two things: it shows the value of internal evidence for the criticism of ancient writings, and its treatment of that evidence in a particular case, viz., the Epistles of Phalaris, furnishes a high order of discipline for the critical faculty.

As a specimen of literary criticism, Bentley's essay was a new phenomenon in history, and had no parallel until the day of scientific criticism of the Pentateuch. Bentley himself did not enter deeply into the literary criticism of the Bible. In 1717, when he became professor of divinity at Cambridge, he read a paper on the famous text of the three heavenly witnesses (1 John 5:7), — not known to be extant, — which text he rejected as spurious, but the particular character of his criticism is unknown.[1] In his

[1] See Monk, *Life of Richard Bentley*, 2. 17.

Phileleutherus Lipsiensis [1] he defended the criticism of the biblical text against scholars like Whitby, who saw in it the undermining of faith and even of religion itself. Here his service to biblical criticism, if less important than in his famous *Dissertations*, was more direct and more immediately fruitful.

In the works of Simon and Bentley we have, if not the very beginning, at least the first permanent monuments of that discipline to which in later times has been given the much misunderstood name of the Higher Criticism.[2] To a contemporary of Bentley may be given in the same relative sense the honor of having founded the department of Lower Criticism. Bentley himself might have been a co-founder of this branch also, had not Parliament refused to allow the importation of paper for his projected Greek New Testament free of duty.[3] There were other obstacles in the way, but this was the decisive one.

Lower or textual criticism of the Bible prepares the way for the interpreter. It may lighten the task of exegesis, as, for example, when it shows that 1 John 5 : 7 is spurious and so to be discarded, or when it simplifies the text by the removal of perplexing variations; and, on the other hand, it may render the task of exegesis more difficult by showing that of several diverse readings of a passage the most obscure is likely to have been the primitive one. But in any case it is plainly a scientifically necessary handmaid of interpretation.

[1] Published in his volume of *Boyle Lectures*, 1692.

[2] Contemporary hostility to criticism as practised by Bentley and others is seen in Swift's *Tale of a Tub* and *Battle of the Books*.

[3] See Monk, *op. cit.*, 2. 148.

The eighteenth century was as noted for its labors in behalf of a purer text of the New Testament as the seventeenth had been for its zeal in collecting classical and Jewish parallels to biblical utterances.[1] This labor was chiefly contributed by German scholars, who come forward more prominently in connection with biblical studies in the eighteenth century than the Dutch and English had done in the century before. Mill (1645–1707) was English, but the other great names — Wetstein (1693–1754), Bengel (1687–1751), Semler (1725–1791), and Griessbach (1745–1812) — are all German. The best service of Mill and Wetstein was in comparing and collating Mss.; that of Bengel, Semler, and Griessbach was in developing valid principles by which to ascertain the primitive reading. These five men probably contributed a total of one hundred and twenty-five years of expert labor to the task of ascertaining the purest possible New Testament text. They did not finish the task, but they laid all future laborers under heavy obligations to them.

The formal science of interpretation was more widely and studiously cultivated by the Germans in the eighteenth century than ever before, and found in the *Institutions*[2] of Rambach (1693–1735) its first worthy presentation. Exegesis is here treated as a branch of human learning, not as a supernatural gift. There is appreciation of its

[1] On Kennicott's work for the Old Testament, see *Introductions* to the Old Testament.

[2] *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae*, editio octava, 1764. The work of A. H. Francke, *Manuductio ad lectionem scripturae sacrae*, published in 1693, suffers from a multiplication of rules and a lack of clear principles.

complexity, and the consequent variety and breadth of qualifications demanded for its successful practice. Yet the author's own view of Scripture was still too much in bondage to the past. Thus, for example, he speaks of the perpetual *agreement* of Scripture,[1] based on the fact that it all has one supreme Author who suggested the very words that should be used. This is the ground of his doctrine of the analogy of faith, which doctrine, though he would not have it encroach on the use of reason, nevertheless virtually does this. The interpreter cannot assume at the outset that the common scope of all Scripture is Christ, as this writer does. No such assumption is to be made. That there is a common doctrine in all biblical writings, and that this is the "Lydian stone" to which obscure passages are to be brought, is not a principle with which a scientific student can operate unless he first establishes it either for a particular book or group of books, or for the entire body of sacred writings.

But no eighteenth-century treatise on interpretation was so notable, no treatise had so great exegetical influence in its own time or so great interest for the next century, as the specimen of actual interpretation afforded by the *Gnomon* of Bengel, whose name has already been mentioned in connection with text-criticism. This work published in Latin in 1742 still possesses fresh interest and value. Its most conspicuous qualities are not accuracy and consistent adherence to sound principles of interpretation. The author speaks of the Scriptures as exhibiting "one entire and perfect body, unencumbered by excess, unimpaired by

[1] See *op. cit.*, pp. 242, 278.

defect."[1] Equally deficient is his general conception of the Gospels, of which he says that "each supplies the omissions of the preceding."[2] The genealogies of Matthew and Luke are accepted not only as historical documents, but also as having theological significance, for Bengel finds in them various proofs of the divinity of Jesus.[3] He is also an easy harmonizer of difficulties in the Gospels. Thus when Matthew places the sermon of Jesus on a mountain and Luke on a plain (Matt. 5:1; Luke 6:17), Bengel says that Jesus came half-way down the mountain; and, as he was coming down with his disciples, he met the people coming up, and sat down there to teach. Or take the case of the "staff." According to Matthew, the apostles, when sent out, were told by the Master not to take certain things, among them a staff, while in Mark's account the staff is specified as something which they *might* take (Mark 6:8; Matt. 10:10). Bengel blends and harmonizes the conflicting texts as follows: "He who had no staff was not to care about procuring one; he, however, who possessed a staff might take it with him, for convenience, not defence!"[4]

The *Gnomon* is also at times extremely fanciful. Thus the indefiniteness of the statement that the Magi came *from the east* intimates "the unrestricted universality of salvation."[5] Still more noteworthy is the lack of a critical literary sense. This is nowhere better illustrated than in the following statement. "The evangelists have transcribed

[1] See Fausset's edition of the *Gnomon*, 1. 5–6.
[2] See *op. cit.*, 1. 71.
[3] See *op. cit.*, pp. 82–108.
[4] See *op. cit.*, p. 239.
[5] See *op. cit.*, p. 121.

at full length two discourses of our Lord as models of all the rest; the one delivered publicly at the commencement of his ministry, the other privately at its conclusion" (Matt. 5:7; John 13:16).[1] But we have no evidence whatever that these two discourses are reported at their original length. The mere fact that they are longer than the other recorded utterances of Jesus does not prove that they preserve all that he said on the respective occasions. They may not preserve half or a quarter; we have absolutely no means of determining the point. As little right have we to infer that these two discourses are models of *all* the rest. Indeed, the Gospels themselves show clearly that Jesus did not always speak after the fashion of the Sermon on the Mount or of the Farewell Discourse in John. The parables furnish a distinct type, and yet another more common is that of the dialogue.

Hence we say that the conspicuous qualities of Bengel's great work are not scientific accuracy or adherence to sound exegetical principles. In the first place, Bengel realized, as no one before him, what Calvin aimed at but did not attain, viz., brevity. He wrote less on an entire Gospel than some of the Puritan divines of the preceding century on a single chapter. Scarcely less conspicuous than his brevity is his lucidity, while underneath these more formal qualities the reader is always aware of a wholesome spiritual personality, and usually of good sense. The most noticeable lack of this last quality is furnished by the exposition of the Apocalypse, that book which has injured the reputation for sanity, not only of its author, but also of

[1] See *op. cit.*, p. 161.

most of its expounders. It is a singular illustration of the inability of great men to estimate truly their own work that Bengel, who made a Church almanac out of the poetical imagery of the Apocalypse, attached to this greater value than to any other part of his commentary. Posterity has judged otherwise.

Besides Bengel there arose no other great commentator in the eighteenth century. The next illustrious biblical work was in the department of historical criticism,[1] and was done by Astruc in France (1684–1766), by Semler and Ernesti (1707–1781) in Germany. In his *Conjectures on Genesis*, published anonymously in 1753, Astruc, who was a professor of medicine in Paris and physician to Louis XV, set forth the now universally accepted documentary theory of the origin of that book. From the repetitions in the text, from the use of the divine names, from the differences between Genesis and other books of the Pentateuch, and from the chronological disorder, he was led to the recognition of two chief sources and two more of secondary importance. In all he postulated twelve documentary sources, but allowed that the limits of a number of them are not fixed.[2]

Of these ancient sources it is interesting to notice that Astruc thought that some may have been outside of Hebrew history[3] — a conjecture whose truth has been abundantly illustrated in later times.

[1] Schultens (1686–1750), by the cultivation of Hebrew through Arabic and other cognate dialects, gave a highly important turn to the philological study of the Old Testament.

[2] See *Conjectures sur la Genese*, chapters 1–3.

[3] See *op. cit.*, p. 322.

The contribution of Semler was not so sharply defined as that of Astruc. It was a spirit rather than a new hypothesis — a spirit of doubt regarding the things once believed, a spirit also of freedom in theological investigation. In his opposition to tradition and dogma, he was a rationalist. In regard to the function of doubt, he was a Cartesian, and his conception of the Bible as a book whose various parts are of unequal value — a conception startlingly hostile to the traditional view — was in line with the thought of Spinoza. His treatise on the literal interpretation of the New Testament [1] marked an advance on the exegetical principles of his predecessors in the clearness with which it set forth the necessity of reading a text in the light of the times with which it deals, the necessity, also, of discovering the historically important moment in a narrative and of subordinating minor points.

Ernesti was the first to set forth in an impressive manner that principle which gave offence to Lord Bacon, viz., that the sense of the Bible is to be ascertained as that of any other book.[2] Therefore he set aside the distinction of Francke between the literal sense and the sense of the letter, and rejected the view of Cocceius that the words of the sacred writings signify all that they can (*quantum possint*).[3] Yet the work of Ernesti was not altogether free from erroneous presuppositions. Thus he denied that there can be real contradictions in the biblical writings, on

[1] *Apparatus ad literalem Novi Testamenti interpretationem*, 1767.

[2] See *Institutio interpretis N. T.*, editio altera, 1765, p. 12.

[3] See *op. cit.*, p. 11: Nullus alius sensus est nisi grammaticus, eumque grammatici tradunt.

the ground that the writers were inspired.[1] Apparently he did not see that this presupposition was at variance with his fundamental principle.

In the last half of the eighteenth century biblical study was permanently enriched by the labors of three men who were, first of all, literary critics and men of poetic sensibility. One of them — the most fascinating of German rationalists — gave utterance to a multitude of acute criticisms on the writings and the religion of the New Testament, some of which have not yet been duly appreciated in the Church; the other two virtually opened for the first time a splendid department of the Hebrew Scriptures, and contributed in no slight degree to secure for the Old Testament its true position among the masterpieces of the world's literature.

The first of these men, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), is known among us rather by his dramas and essays than by his criticisms in the department of New Testament literature and religion, though in this, also, his thought was brilliant and suggestive. We are concerned with that criticism here chiefly as it bears upon the interpretation of Scripture.

Lessing was perhaps the first to gain a hearing for the view that neither the miracles of the New Testament nor the prophecies of the Old are a proof of Christianity.[2] Regarding the latter point he appears to have gone too far, rejecting the good with the bad, yet his discussion of the

[1] See *op. cit.*, p. 15. This statement appears to be modified by that on p. 73.

[2] See his *Sämmtliche Werke*, edited by Karl Lachmann, 13, 3–8.

subject was the most stimulating that had been heard up to his day.

Lessing was the first, so far as I am aware, to bring out the truth that the objections which reason may bring against the Bible are not necessarily objections to the biblical religion.[1] Christianity existed before the New Testament was written, and might therefore, conceivably, continue without it. It is not true because the evangelists and apostles taught it, but they taught it because it is true.

In his criticism of the Gospels, it is now plain that Lessing was often in error, but also plain that he was often in the right. He seems to have had no conception of the peculiar character of the Fourth Gospel,[2] and few will agree with him that Jesus expected the Levitical law to be permanently observed in his Kingdom,[3] or that this Kingdom was to be earthly, in the thought of Jesus.[4] But he was the first to suggest that an important distinction is to be made between the teaching of the apostles and that of Jesus;[5] the first to suggest that the words of Jesus afford no basis for the doctrine of the Trinity;[6] and the first to advance arguments more or less valid against the genuineness of Matt. 28: 19.[7]

The men who turned an entirely new page in the history of interpretation were Lowth (1710–1787) and Herder (1744–1803), the former a bishop of the English Church, the latter court-preacher at Weimar. Lowth's *Lectures on Hebrew Poetry*, given at Oxford, were published in

[1] See *op. cit.*, p. 99. [2] See *op. cit.*, p. 238.
[3] See *op. cit.*, pp. 245 f. [4] See *op. cit.*, pp. 277–279.
[5] See *op. cit.*, p. 223. [6] See *op. cit.*, p. 238. [7] See *op. cit.*, p. 252.

1753, and Herder's *Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* was published in 1782.

The English writer was hampered in his work by his view of inspiration. Hebrew poetry, he thought, "was not so much the offspring of human genius as an emanation from heaven." But, naturally, if a poem is regarded as primarily "an emanation from heaven," there can scarcely be a free criticism of it, neither can it have an absorbing human interest as a literary product. Yet it was much to have called attention to the poetry of the Old Testament, as bishop Lowth did, and to have asserted, however imperfectly, its claim to be considered as beautiful and sublime literature.[1]

Herder was rarely gifted both with literary insight and power of literary expression. To him Hebrew poetry was a fresh divine revelation that stirred his soul to its depths, and made him an enthusiastic interpreter. He was free, too, from dogmatic bias. He moved through the Scriptures with the delight and wonder and glad sense of liberty with which a normal soul attuned to Nature moves through the fields or woods in the freshness of some June morning. The Bible, he said, is a garden, not a prison; a world of change and fruitfulness, not a workhouse. It was written by men and for men, and must be read as a human book.[2] Nature-poetry, such as we have in Job and elsewhere in the Old Testament, is the beautiful interpreter of Nature as God made it.[3] It enlarges the heart as also the mind;

[1] Milton, in his Tract *Against Prelacy*, speaks of the incomparable lyrics of the Bible, but, unfortunately, never wrote at length on the subject.

[2] See *Sämmtliche Werke*, edited by Suphan, II. 5–10.

[3] See *op. cit.* II. 292.

makes this quiet and observing, that active, free, and glad. It creates love, appreciation, and sympathy with all that lives. Herder was, I think, the first to point out the poetic character of the early chapters of Genesis, and thus to point at last to a satisfactory interpretation of them.[1] He regarded the book of Jonah also as a poem, and asked the pertinent question: "If it is beautiful, fit and profitable as a poem, why should we rack our brains to construe it as history?"[2]

We are now come to the limit of the period which we set out to consider, and shall seek to indicate in a few closing words, not the value of the normal type of exegesis which left its stamp on a multitude of now mostly forgotten books, but the steps of progress, fewer in number than the decades of the long period itself, by means of which we ourselves are the richer and more assured in the knowledge of the truth.

The first sign of exegetical progress in the seventeenth century was a reaction against the tyranny of dogma, and this reaction was promoted throughout the entire period, not only by the results of the most eminent biblical scholarship, but also by philosophy. The materials for the explanation and illustration of Scripture were largely increased in this century, especially through the investigation of the rabbinical literature. The close of the seventeenth century saw the beginning of a scientific historical criticism in the department of biblical introduction and

[1] See *op. cit.*, 10. 16; 11. 381 f.
[2] See *op. cit.*, 10. 102.

saw the erection of the first conspicuous monument of purely literary criticism.

The eighteenth century was distinguished by its work for a purer text of the New Testament, by the beginning of a formal science of interpretation, by the production of one of the few great commentaries, by the establishment of the documentary hypothesis to explain the origin of Genesis, by the weakening of the traditional doctrine of inspiration, by general progress in the rationalization and humanization of Scripture, and, last of all, by the discovery that the Bible is not only a divine guide for the heart and the will, but is also a thesaurus of immortal poetry, which fascinates and uplifts the imagination.

CHAPTER X

THE SCIENTIFIC ERA OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

At the close of the eighteenth century the science of biblical interpretation had reached the foot-hills of the "promised land," but no one saw or could see the heights that rose in majesty just ahead. The progress of the past three centuries — yes, of the past thirteen — was to be more than duplicated before the nineteenth century should have given way to the twentieth. A simple enumeration of the discoveries affecting Scripture interpretation, and of the changes in the dominant conceptions of the Bible which were to come in the next hundred years, would have seemed to the men of that day stranger than fiction, and by the great majority even of thinking people would doubtless have been regarded as heralding the final and irremediable collapse of true religion.

The outlook for progress in the biblical world at the beginning of the nineteenth century continued essentially unchanged for about a generation. Not that the period was barren and without promise, for De Wette († 1849) and Schleiermacher († 1834) in Germany, and Coleridge († 1834) in England, were forces as stimulating to a better knowledge of revelation as Lessing and Herder had been

at the close of the eighteenth century,[1] while Gesenius' *Hebrew Lexicon* and *Grammar* (1812, 1813) and Winer's *Grammar of New Testament Greek* (1821) marked a great advance on all similar works of the earlier time; but still the period as compared with the following was one of preparation rather than of fulfilment. In the second quarter of the century arose the great critical movement in Germany, led by Strauss († 1874) and F. C. Baur († 1860), a movement destructive of tradition and productive of an immense and more scientific activity in the investigation of Scripture. In the same years began the Romance of the Spade, the uncovering of long-buried civilizations in the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates.[2] In the third quarter of the century came the message of Natural Science, notably in England, which indeed at the time appeared to be more dangerous to the Bible than even German criticism, but which has nevertheless entered deeply and helpfully into all subsequent literature of interpretation. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century and in the opening years of our own, there has been a wide and fruitful application of the new principles to the interpretation of Scripture.

As one surveys this modern era of biblical study which has continued now about three quarters of a century, two general facts of great though unequal significance are seen

[1] De Wette's *Beiträge zur Einleitung ins AT.*, were published in 1806–1807, Schleiermacher's *Reden über die Religion* in 1799, and Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* in 1825.

[2] The palace of Sargon was discovered by Botta in 1843, that of Shalmaneser by Layard in 1846, and Lepsius in the same decade opened a large number of tombs at Memphis.

to characterize it. These facts are new freedom of research and new points of view. The new freedom has not been equally shared by all Protestant lands. Germany, which has led all other countries in biblical research, has had, as we should expect, the greatest measure of freedom; then follow Holland, England, France, and America. In general, there has been an increase of freedom for biblical scholarship as the century has passed. A modern Strauss or Scherer would not lose his university chair in Germany or France;[1] a second Bishop Colenso could freely set forth his views within the English Church without fear of removal;[2] and in the United States, at least in the greater universities, scholars are unhampered in the pursuit of truth. Outside the Church and the academic sphere, freedom of utterance on religious as on political subjects has come to be nearly absolute in Protestant lands. Here, indeed, the word of Phillips Brooks spoken in 1883 is true, that now for the first time in many centuries the hand of external restraint is absolutely taken off from theological thinking. But not yet is this word true where its truth would be of the highest value to men, viz., in institutions for the training of the ministry.[3] But in spite

[1] Strauss was called to Zurich in 1836, but was not allowed to teach. Scherer resigned his chair at Geneva, in 1849, on account of his view of inspiration.

[2] Colenso, bishop of Capetown, was removed from office in 1863 for his views on the Pentateuch. In 1864 the Privy Council of Great Britain gave a deliverance which established theological liberty for clergymen in the Church of England.

[3] Within ten years after the utterance of Phillips Brooks the Presbyterian Church suspended from the ministry her best-known O. T. scholar, Professor Briggs, and removed Professor H. P. Smith from his chair

of denominational narrowness and that spirit of persecution which, when backed by ecclesiastical authority, still hinders the progress of truth, it is perfectly obvious that there has been greater freedom for biblical study in the past half century than in any former period since biblical study began. That this fact has been essential to recent progress is almost self-evident.

The other fact that has fundamentally affected recent biblical interpretation is the establishment of new points of view. These are two — the point of view of Natural Science and the point of view of Comparative Religion. The former was effectively pressed upon thoughtful students of the Bible by the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859, and the latter by George Smith's discovery of the Assyrian Flood-tablets in 1872. From these two new points of view have proceeded the most radical external influences that are aiding Historical Criticism.

The essential thought of Mr. Darwin was very soon applied in the religious sphere. When the brief period of consternation had passed, the conception of Evolution as a method of divine action was welcomed, yes *seized*, as affording a more adequate solution of many problems. Men began to speak of the evolution of the Old Testament as literature, the evolution of religion, the evolution

at Lane Seminary; and in the next decade the Methodist Church removed Professor Mitchell from his chair at Boston University, and the Board of Chicago Seminary (Congregational) removed its professor of N. T. Interpretation. The removal of these men was due in every case, not to any disloyalty to the Word of God, but solely to their departure, in varying degrees, from the doctrines of the several denominations to which they belonged.

of Christianity, the evolution of the conscience, and so forth. At the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, Henry Drummond [1] could declare without contradiction that "evolution as a category of thought was the supreme word of the nineteenth century"; and nine years later an Oxford professor wrote that "no section of the Church that counts for much now denies the facts of Geology, and Darwinism is no longer regarded as the foe of the Christian faith." [2] The uniformity of Nature has come to be looked upon as an axiom.[3]

This point of view of Natural Science was in accord with the literary and historical criticism of Scripture. Natural Science, though a foe of unscientific traditional theology, was an ally of Criticism, and hence from the first exercised on it and through it a potent influence.

The second new point of view, that of Comparative Religion, though by no means independent of the hypothesis of evolution, has, nevertheless, its own place and worth. Tiele puts the beginning of this science about the middle of the nineteenth century, but it was more than twenty years later before it came into vital contact with biblical interpretation. In the cuneiform tablets which had been accumulating in the British Museum since the days of

[1] See *The World's Parliament of Religions*, 2. 13. 16. The statement of Drummond that Science gave the scientific method to religion is hardly historical. See Smith, *Life of Henry Drummond*, p. 244. That method was developed among scholars of the Bible.

[2] See *Contentio Veritatis*, 1902, Preface.

[3] See Lodge, *Hibbert Journal*, 1. 2. On the theological significance of our enlarged view of Nature, see W. N. Clarke, *Christian Theology*, ninth edition, 1901, pp. 50–51.

Rawlinson and Layard, there were discovered Assyrian parallels of certain passages of Genesis which dated from a time long prior to the composition of that book. This was the opening of a new and most important chapter in the history of biblical interpretation. From the discovery of these Flood-tablets by George Smith down to the present day, the stream of information flowing from the literature of ancient Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt has steadily increased. The study of other religions, as those of Persia and India, has not been without its influence on the interpretation of the Bible, but from the nature of the case no religions and no civilizations could be of so great value to the interpreter of the Old Testament as the religions and civilizations of those peoples with whom the Hebrews stood in close contact and whose history can be traced back many centuries before the time of Abraham.[1]

We proceed now from this general survey of the unique factors that have entered as a new leaven into our modern interpretation of Scripture to a somewhat narrower view of the subject. It will be the aim in what follows to consider the new method of interpretation at work and in its more comprehensive aspects. Not to lose one's self in the details of this modern era of interpretation, of which the mass is almost infinite, but to keep aloft where events and forces can be studied in their broader relations to each other, seems plainly the end to be kept in view.

[1] Professor Jastrow says that "an understanding of the Hebrew religion is impossible without a constant consideration of the religion and culture that were developed in the Euphrates valley." Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, article "Religion of Babylonia."

The new method of interpretation is Historical Criticism.[1] Its sole aim is to get at the facts and to learn their meaning. It is a scientific method, for it involves, as Adeney has said, "a rigorous exclusion of mere assumptions, a full and careful induction of all the evidence, a strict, unbiassed process of arriving at conclusions, and an orderly arrangement and classification of the knowledge thus attained."[2] This method is so unlike that which had prevailed for centuries, and has withal such an uncompromising aspect and tone in relation to tradition, that it has gained its victories only in the face of much opposition. When it began to be known in England a half century ago, it was one of the forces that led to the Tractarian Movement with its exaltation of ecclesiastical authority in its most absolute form.[3] Near the close of the nineteenth century a distinguished president of a New England college spoke of criticism as "a great movement against the trustworthiness of the ancient Scriptures."[4] And still later, in 1905,

[1] The *theory* of interpretation (Hermeneutics) has been practically reduced to the one precept of Jowett (*Essays and Reviews*, p. 416): "Interpret the Scripture like any other book." This principle is fundamental in the hermeneutics of Schleiermacher (*Sämmtliche Werke*, Band 7) and of Immer (*Hermeneutik des N. T.*, 1873), the two chief writers on the subject during the past century.

[2] *A Century's Progress in Religious Thought and Life*, 1901, p. 59. Comp. Briggs, *The Study of Holy Scripture*, 1899, p. 78.

[3] Newman, the leader of the Tractarian Movement, stood at the farthest distance from Historical Criticism. This is well illustrated when he claims that the miraculous oil of St. Walburga still flows, and also when he says that *after* he entered the Roman Church he had no difficulty in believing the doctrine of Transubstantiation. See *Apologia pro vita sua*, pp. 251, 300 f.

[4] Bartlett, *The Veracity of the Hexateuch*, 1897, Preface.

Sir Robert Anderson, in a widely circulated book for which the bishop of Durham wrote the Preface, characterized Higher Criticism as "a sceptical crusade against the Bible, tending to lower it to the level of a purely human book," and declared that it "systematically ignores the science of evidence." [1] We have had in the United States the spectacle of a numerous conference of ministers and teachers of theology gathered together for the purpose of protesting against Higher Criticism.[2] Such protests,[3] however, rarely win the approval of a scholar. They appeal mainly to those whose devotion to the Bible contains a large element of unwholesome sentiment or downright ignorance, or both together.

But the critical method, though spoken against and even forcibly opposed, has been accepted by the author of nearly every marked contribution to biblical interpretation during the past three decades in all Protestant lands. It has rightly been recognized as the chief "charism" of our age,[4] and the special gift of God to the modern Church.[5] "Historical Criticism," said W. Robertson Smith, "is a reality and a force, because it unfolds a living and consistent picture

[1] *The Bible and Modern Criticism*, fifth edition, 1905, pp. 43, 254. The author regards Harnack as an "arch-heretic," finds "blasphemy" in Schmiedel's article on Jesus in the *Ency. Bibl.*, and declares that it is "shockingly profane" to say that Abraham was a "lunar hero."

[2] See *Anti-Higher Criticism*, 1894, to which volume even Professor W. H. Green contributed.

[3] To these must now be added the Pope's Encyclical against "Modernism," September, 1907.

[4] Delitzsch, quoted by Grant in the *American Journal of Theology*, January, 1902.

[5] Ryle, *The Canon of the Old Testament*, p. 14.

of the Old Dispensation," [1] and what he said of criticism in relation to the Old Testament is none the less true in relation to the New.

This scientific method has at length raised Bible study out of its provincialism, and has opened it to all light from every quarter. With the aid of its new allies — Natural Science and Comparative Religion — it is slowly reconstructing, from its foundation, not only our conception of the origin of the Bible, but also every one of the great doctrines of the Church. Since we are in the midst of this process of reconstruction, it is impossible to record final results, at least on most subjects; but we can note the trend of thought, and can see what definite gains the new interpretation has made, and what problems are emerging into view.

It is to be noted, in the first place, that Criticism has wrought a profound transformation in the general conception of the origin and character of the Bible, a transformation as radical as that which the conception of the Church underwent at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is coming to be recognized widely and clearly, what Grotius perceived long ago, that revelation is not to be identified with the Bible, that it belongs rather in the *lives* of the men who produced the Scriptures, and that the Bible is sacred because the underlying history was sacred.[2] Historical

[1] *The O. T. in the Jewish Church*, second edition, 1902, Preface.

[2] See Bruce, *Apologetics*, pp. 300 f.; Abbott, *The Evolution of Christianity*, p. 66: "The Bible is the History of the Growth of man's consciousness of God"; Sabatier, *The Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*, p. 208. Sabatier's idea of revelation — "God carrying on the progressive education of humanity" — is like that of Lessing. Also Ewald, *Revelation*, English translation, 1884, p. 432.

Criticism does not deny that the Bible makes us acquainted with a true revelation of God, but it teaches that we can no more identify the book and the revelation than we could identify the book and the spiritual experiences of Isaiah and Paul and the rest.

Not only has revelation been separated from the Bible, but the idea of revelation has grown wider as the impartial study of other religions has progressed.[1] We are coming to think of our Bible as the supreme part of the great Bible of humanity, even as we are beginning to see in the Gospel of Jesus the supreme part of our Bible. We recognize that the Bible, Old Testament and New, teaches that God has revealed himself to other peoples besides the Hebrews, and therefore that religions cannot be divided into the true and the false. The difference between the Bible and other sacred books, wide though it is, is yet one of degree, not one of kind.[2]

The content of the word "inspiration" is no less changed than that of the term "revelation," and changed primarily

[1] Pusey's Declaration, which affirms that the Scriptures *are* the word of God rather than contain it, was, in 1864, signed by eleven thousand clergymen in England and Wales out of twenty-five thousand to whom it had been sent. These figures would be greatly changed were a vote taken there to-day. See Carpenter, *Interpretation in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 38–39.

Already in *Essays and Reviews* (1860) this thought was expressed by Jowett, and since then it has come into ever clearer recognition.

[2] Impartial reading of other sacred books side by side with the Bible, or of some writings of the Greeks and Romans not regarded as sacred, affords the best confirmation of the above statement.

Comp. Simon, *The Bible an Outgrowth of Theocratic Life*, 1886, p. 39; Matheson, *The Distinctive Messages of the Old Religions*, 1893.

in consequence of a more scientific study of the Scriptures themselves. If revelation is seen to be a flexible term, so also is inspiration. If there are degrees of fulness in the revelation of God to different peoples, it is equally obvious that there are degrees of inspiration. We judge of the alleged revelation by the writings which make it known, and by the writings, also, we judge of the inspiration of the writers. For inspiration, it is now widely agreed,[1] *does* belong to the writer, not to the writing. Whether any clear distinction is to be made between revelation and inspiration is not yet settled.[2] They are at least close correlatives, parts of one and the same spiritual process. But the important points on which scholars are coming into agreement are, first, that there are degrees of inspiration in the different writers of Scripture, ranging from the very low to the very high; and second, that the test of inspiration is spiritual experience. The thought of Coleridge — what *finds* me is thereby shown to be from the Holy Spirit, what finds me at the greatest depths of my being is most fully inspired[3] — indicates the most important trend of the modern mind on this subject. It has had its most striking recent expression in the words of Martineau: "We never acknowledge authority till that which speaks to us from another

[1] See *e.g.*, Sanday, *Inspiration*, fifth edition, 1903, p. 399 (the critical view of inspiration makes it something "*living*"); Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, 1903, pp. 497 f.

This view of inspiration accords with what has been called "the most fundamental theological thought of the age." Comp. King, *Reconstruction in Theology*, 1901, p. 155.

[2] See Schultz, *Christian Apologetics*, English translation by Alfred B. Nichols, 1905, p. 77.

[3] *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, 1840, Letters I–II.

and higher strikes home and wakes the echoes in ourselves." [1]

This conception of varying degrees of inspiration is not altogether new. We have seen in an earlier chapter that the ancient Jews made such a distinction, and have noted it here and there in the history of the Christian Church. The new element in the modern conception is its spirituality. Inspiration is carried back beyond the material writings, where it used to stop, into human minds and hearts; and these among the Hebrews, as among other peoples, were unequally receptive of divine influences.

A natural and inevitable conclusion from historical study is the fallibility of the Bible.[2] Criticism did not set out, as did Mr. Huxley in a certain volume of essays,[3] with the avowed purpose to destroy the doctrine of the infallibility of Scripture. It, of course, proceeded in its work quite independently of this doctrine, and for this reason its conclusion has scientific value. That conclusion is very generally held and is perfectly definite. The literal inerrancy or infallibility of the Bible is a doctrine as completely superseded as is the biblical cosmogony. Every one of the sixty-six books of the Bible is a witness against it, and not unwillingly but willingly, for the doctrine of infallibility has injured the Bible more than all the assaults of its professed enemies.

[1] *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, 1890, Preface.

[2] The declaration of Dean Burgon, quoted by Carpenter, *Interpretation in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 7, sounds like an echo from the Middle Ages: "Every book of it (the Bible), every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High."

[3] *Science and Hebrew Tradition.*

Again, the impartial scholar of the present rarely claims that the Scriptures, though admitted to be fallible in unimportant details, are nevertheless infallible in all matters pertaining to faith and life.[1] As Dr. Dods says in his Lake Forest Lectures, there are certain irreconcilable discrepancies even between the accounts of some of our Lord's sayings.[2] There are points in his teaching which are obscure and uncertain.[3]

Now this fact alone forbids our speaking of the Bible as absolutely infallible in all matters of faith and life. It is doubtless quite *sufficient* unto salvation, — which is the one practical concern, — but it is not infallible, nor does it claim to be. Christian history abundantly supports the statement of Professor Bowne [4] that we need no infallible authority, whether of book or of Church, and Criticism demonstrates, as regards the book, that we certainly *have* no infallible authority. Many will agree with Dr. Abbott that an infallible book is an impossible conception.[5]

Thus it is seen that our general conception of the origin and character of the Bible has been radically transformed. And we are immense gainers by the transformation. Historical Criticism, like all true science, destroys only

[1] See Briggs, *The Study of Holy Scripture*, p. 75. McFadyen, *O. T. Criticism and the Christian Church*, pp. 268–312, though strongly asserting inspiration, shows that the Bible is not always morally and religiously true.

[2] *The Bible, its Nature and Origin*, 1905, p. 135.

[3] Consider, for example, the whole subject of Eschatology. What did Jesus really teach? In particular, what did he say about a second coming? This is a matter that pertains to "faith and life." At least, Paul so regarded it.

[4] *The Immanence of God*, 1905, p. 112.

[5] *The Evolution of Christianity*, p. 36.

error. The Bible has been humanized, given its place among the religious literatures of the world, and thereby its divine character is being for the first time truly appreciated.[1] The attainment of this new conception of the Bible as a whole, since it conditions the understanding of all the separate parts and teachings of the Bible, is perhaps the most important event in the entire history of interpretation.

Again, it is to be noted that Criticism has made of the Pentateuch a practically new book. The traditional view of it, going back to Philo and even to earlier generations, has been proven to be wide of the truth. The speculation of Spinoza, who assigned the Pentateuch and the seven following books to Ezra the scribe, was at least a remarkably prescient guess. Historical Criticism agrees with Spinoza that the Pentateuch was not composed by Moses, and that in its present form it was not earlier than the time of Ezra.[2] The book of Deuteronomy, or at least the greater part of it, was indeed composed some two hundred years before Ezra, being identical with that "book of the law" which Hilkiah found in the temple in the eighteenth year of Josiah.[3] Other documents which were later incorporated in our Pentateuch may have originated as early as

[1] Criticism does not lower the Bible to the level of other books, even of the best, as it does not reduce Jesus to the stature of other men, even of the best. On the contrary, it indicates the only way by which what is really of God in either case can be found.

[2] For the critical view and for references to the extensive modern literature, see Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, ninth edition, 1899.

[3] This the view of Graf, published in 1865. See Kuenen, *The Hexateuch*, English translation, 1886.

the ninth century.[1] The interval, therefore, between Moses, the reputed author of the Pentateuch, and its earliest written portions, was about equal to that between Columbus and our day, while the interval between Moses and the *completed* Pentateuch was as long as the period that stretches from us to the Norman Conquest.

Some scholars find nothing whatever in the Pentateuch which can be assigned to Moses, not even the Decalogue;[2] others think that this fundamental code, at least in its earlier form as found in Ex. 34, perhaps also some further elements, came from the great lawgiver.[3] But the main position that the production of our Pentateuch was centuries after the time of Moses is established on the most solid basis. Thus the true chronological order is not Law and Prophets, but Prophets and Law, and Historical Criticism points to the writings of Hosea and Amos as the earliest parts of the Old Testament. This reversal of ancient judgments is of great significance as regards the literature and history of the Hebrews. If it detracts somewhat from the traditional versatility of Moses, it gives light and consistency to the picture of the religious development of Israel.

The book of Genesis, which from very ancient times had been the especial favorite of allegorical interpreters and which, on the false assumption that it is an authoritative teacher of science, was quoted for centuries against scien-

[1] The composite character of the Pentateuch has parallels in the literature of Egypt and Babylonia. Sayce, *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, sixth edition, 1901, pp. 30–34.

[2] For example, Budde, *Religion of Israel to the Exile*, 1899, p. 32.

[3] For example, Professor Barton, *Semitic Origins*, 1902, p. 295.

tific progress, has been read anew by Historical Criticism, and this new reading is another conspicuous achievement of the modern era. The first eleven chapters of Genesis, in particular, have been reinterpreted. It has been shown, for instance, that scientific accuracy is not an attribute of the first chapter; that while it expresses the religious belief that the visible universe was created by God, the method and order of this creation cannot be reconciled with the discoveries of science. Thus, for example, creation was not accomplished in six days, nor was there light and a vegetable kingdom before the creation of the light-giving bodies, nor were primitive men and the primitive animals vegetarians. The traditional view of this chapter as represented by Mr. Gladstone was driven from the field by Mr. Huxley.[1]

Chapters 2–11, containing the narrative of the creation of Eve, the narrative of the Fall, of the tower of Babel, of the Flood, and others, are regarded now as mainly unhistorical.[2] The chronology which they contain is manifestly untenable. The Hebrew text allows only 4219 years between the first man and Christ, which period the Greek translation of the Old Testament increased to 5408 years; but the discoveries of the last half century in Egypt and in the valley of the Euphrates prove that there were populous nations at as early a period as that, and nations, too, whose intellectual and social development imply an existence of

[1] See Articles in the *Nineteenth Century* for December, 1885, and February, 1886.

[2] See G. A. Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the O. T.*, 1901, p. 90; Burney, *Contentio Veritatis*, pp. 169–170; Dillmann, *Die Genesis*.

many centuries.[1] The investigations of ethnologists and the doctrine of evolution suggest that man's presence on the earth is to be measured by tens or even hundreds of thousands of years.[2] What Professor Driver says of the entire book of Genesis is applicable, as regards its main thought, to chapters 2–11: "As a result of the archæological and ethnological researches of the past half century, the beliefs of the Israelites about the origin and early history of the world, their social usages, their civil and criminal law, their religious institutions, can no longer be viewed, as was once possible, as differing in kind from those of other nations, and determined in every feature by a direct revelation from heaven; all, it is now known, have substantial analogies among other peoples, the distinguishing characteristic which they exhibit among the Hebrews consisting in the spirit with which they are infused, and the higher principles of which they are made the exponent."[3]

But though chapters 2–11 have lost in historical character, they have gained immeasurably in spiritual value. It does not lessen their worth to discover that they are the refined product of centuries, perhaps of millenniums, of brooding over the questions with which they deal.

[1] Professor Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, 1906, 1. 30, holds on astronomical grounds that the Egyptians introduced the calendar in 4241 B.C., which he regards as the oldest fixed date in history. He puts the accession of Menes at 3400 B.C., which Müller, *Encyclopædia Biblica*, assigns to about 4000 B.C., and Petrie carries back to 4777 B.C. See *Authority and Archæology*, p. 215. Hommel puts the beginning of Babylonian history "considerably earlier than 4000 B.C." See Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, article "Babylonia."

[2] See Fiske, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 7. 33–67.

[3] See *Authority and Archæology*, edited by D. G. Hogarth, 1899, p. 7.

To the remaining chapters of Genesis criticism allows somewhat greater historical value,[1] yet cautions us against rating it too high.

We pass now from the Law to the Prophets, but only to take notice of two points. From the time of Eichhorn († 1827) and Gesenius († 1842) it has become more and more manifest that the book called *Isaiah* comes from at least two writers who were separated from each other by about two hundred years. Some scholars increase the number of authors and also the period in which the several component parts were written. Professor Cheyne dates the last eleven chapters from the time of Nehemiah, and puts the redaction of the entire work not less than five centuries after Isaiah, the son of Amoz.[2] Thus, instead of one great prophet as sole author, who lived in the latter part of the eighth century B.C., we have at least three, one of whom lived in the second half of the sixth century; and instead of regarding chapters 40–66 as in large part a supernatural prevision of exilic circumstances, we see in them, or at least in chapters 40–55, a message that originated in the very time with which it is concerned.

The interpretation of Old Testament prophecy is a subject on which there is still not a little difference of views. One thing, however, is obvious, viz., that the present age is making far less apologetic use of prophecy than was made in the early centuries. The proof of the divinity of Christ out of the prophets, which was once universal and unques-

[1] Professor McCurdy, *Recent Research in Bible Lands*, 1896, edited by H. V. Hilprecht, regards the whole of Gen. 14 as history. Cf. Driver, *Authority and Archæology*, p. 44.

[2] *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah*, 1895.

tioned, is at present little employed, and then in a greatly modified form. The influence of Historical Criticism has been to lessen, if not entirely to destroy, the traditional predictive use of isolated texts of the prophetic writings. The prophets are no longer thought to have value in proportion to the extent and clearness of their references to a coming deliverer. They are beginning to be read and understood in the light of their own times, as men zealous for the God of Israel, as ardent patriots, as practical reformers, as the foremost spiritual leaders of their respective ages. Some of them saw beyond the struggles and the sufferings of the present a divinely sent and righteous King, but more of them make no reference to any other intervention than that of Jehovah, the God of Israel.[1]

Historical Criticism is abandoning the orthodox interpretation of even the classical texts in Isaiah. Thus the argument for the divinity of Christ from the names in Is. 9:6, once supposed to be invincible, is quietly set aside even by a writer on Apologetics. "Historical exegesis," says Dr. Bruce, "may not justify us in treating Isaiah's list of wondrous attributes as personal characteristics and so arriving at the conclusion that the Saviour of the latter days is to be not merely a great man, but God Almighty."[2] In like manner, George Adam Smith[3] discovers no reference to a supernatural birth of Jesus in

[1] According to Stanton we do not find references to the Messiah as a *unique* personality, in distinction from the Davidic Kings, until we come to the post-canonical writers, with the possible exception of Dan. 9:24–26. See Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, article "Messiah."

[2] *Apologetics*, p. 259.

[3] *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the O. T.*, 1901, p. 160. See

Is. 7 : 14 — a text which from the days of Justin Martyr even to the present has been forced into the service of a theological doctrine undreamed of by its author.

Thus Historical Criticism is approaching (apparently without recognizing it) that view of Messianic prophecy which, as we have shown in a former chapter, was held by Jesus.

When we turn from the Old Testament to the New, we find that here also Historical Criticism, in many instances, is overturning the conclusions of centuries. The problems it encounters in this field are no less difficult than those of the Hebrew Scriptures, while the attitude of the Church toward the application of criticism to the New Testament, especially to the Gospels, has been decidedly more reserved and suspicious than it was in the case of the Old Testament.[1]

The initial event of this modern era of New Testament study — the publication of Strauss' *Leben Jesu* in 1835 — was of a character to beget a deep and lasting antipathy toward the critical handling of the Gospels, for it reduced the story of Jesus to unconscious poetry and myth, and declared that the historical Jesus is quite unknown to us. The second great event of the era — the publication of Baur's reconstruction of the Apostolic Age,[2] though far less negative in character than the work of Strauss, and

also Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja*, p. 76. Marti says that *Alma* does not refer to a definite woman, nor *Immanuel* to the Messiah.

[1] On the incorrectness of this attitude, see Moffatt, *The Historical New Testament*, 1901, pp. 71–75.

[2] *Die Christliche Gnosis*, 1835; *Paulus*, 1845.

not incorrectly described as "a fundamental achievement for all future investigation of Christianity," yet so humanized, not to say vulgarized, the constructive motives and forces at work in the production of Acts and the apostolic epistles that it gave the Church a shock from which it has been long in recovering. But Strauss and Baur rendered at least one immeasurable service, viz., that they forced the Church to a critical study of the New Testament, which has continued with increasing fruitfulness to the present hour. Its results come home to Christian faith in a more vital manner than results in the field of Old Testament investigation; and it is therefore both natural and right that they should be held off at a distance until their claim to acceptance has been made abundantly good. When that shall be done, they must of course be received, and the former views will pass away.

In the interpretation of the New Testament during the modern era, the results of Historical Criticism have borne a striking analogy to those reached in the study of the Old Testament. Thus the Gospels, like the Pentateuch, have been shown to be composite; their dates and the dates of not a few other writings of the New Testament have been brought down considerably farther from the time of Jesus than the traditional dates, just as many writings of the Old Testament have been demonstrated to be younger than was formerly supposed;[1] and as the prophetic ele-

[1] Bacon, *Introduction to the N. T.*, 1900, assigns Mark to the early years after the destruction of Jerusalem; Matthew to the period 80–90; Luke and Acts to the later part of Domitian's reign (81–96); Hebrews to the closing years of the century. Schmiedel puts Luke in the period

ment in the Old Testament has come into new historical significance, the Law in the meantime taking a subordinate place, so the teaching of Jesus, his *prophetic* activity, has assumed greater prominence in comparison with the sacrificial and institutional elements in the Gospels. Again, as the Old Testament has been broken up into parts whose spiritual value is seen to be very unlike, — the earlier, prophetic part showing the high-water mark, and the later, priestly portion registering a decline, — so in the New Testament field the conceptions of the apostles are beginning to be seen to be on a lower level than those of Jesus.[1] And finally, to the legendary element in the Old Testament, which flowers out in the book of Genesis, it is now recognized that the New Testament is not entirely lacking in parallels.[2]

Of the greater features of New Testament interpretation in the modern era, the first to be noticed is the partial[3] solution of the literary interrelation of the first three Gospels. A long series of scholars beginning with Wilke and Weisse in Germany, whose views on this subject were published in 1838, have come to the same conclusions on

100–110, and Matthew before 130, perhaps about 119. See *Encyclopædia Biblica*, article "Gospels."

[1] This fact has scarcely begun to be appreciated. The remark of T. H. Green that Jesus and Paul are the "*two* parents of our faith," and the thought of another English writer that Paul was raised up to express what Jesus was obliged to leave unexpressed, illustrate a very general view on the subject.

[2] See, *e.g.*, Dr. Bruce, article "Jesus" in *Encyclopædia Biblica;* and especially Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 1895.

[3] For the latest survey of the question as relates especially to Mark, see Holtzmann, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 1907, Nos. 1–2.

some general points; first, that Mark was the earliest of our Gospels; and second, that Mark and a document which contained chiefly words of Jesus were the two main sources both of Matthew and Luke. The material of each of the Synoptics goes back ultimately to oral tradition,[1] for no one of them was composed by an eye-witness. Each is the result of processes of transmission which have not been traced and probably never can be. The unprofitable attempt to harmonize their differences has now given place to an endeavor to understand each in the light of its own manifest aim. It is coming to be recognized that even the first three Gospels, and particularly Matthew, have a considerable interpretative element; that their motive was primarily religious; and that they reflect to some extent the views current in the Church at the time of their origin. The interpreter must therefore seek through a comparison of the sources and a critical study of each by itself to get back of these earliest interpretative accounts and to see the initial facts for himself. And this is possible now as it never was before.

Again, Historical Criticism is slowly moulding a new conception of the Gospel of John. This writing, it is true, is still the Sphinx of New Testament criticism, and scholars differ widely regarding its origin and historical value. Some still think that it was written by the apostle John,[2]

[1] Schmiedel, in the article just quoted, thinks it probable that the written sources of Mark and the Logia may themselves have rested on other written sources, and possible that the earliest written source of both may have been Aramaic.

[2] See, *e.g.*, Dods, *The Bible, its Nature and Origin*, p. 186; Drummond, *An Inquiry into the Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, 1903; and Ladd, *The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, 2. 244.

though of these most allow that it is largely an interpretation of the life and teaching of Jesus rather than a history. Other scholars find a historical element in the book, genuine memoirs of the apostle, but deny that the writing can possibly have come from his hand.[1] And finally, there are competent investigators[2] who do not discover in this Gospel any *independent* value as an authority for the history of Jesus. Yet in spite of all this divergence of view among scholars, it is plain that Historical Criticism is changing the traditional conception of this book. The time seems to be past when it can be ranked with the Synoptics in respect to its historical value. Even if apostolic authorship has not already been made too improbable to be longer entertained, yet the boldly interpretative and speculative character of the book is too clear to allow its use as a source of the life and teaching of Jesus which has equal value with the earlier and more objective sources. Therefore instead of continuing, as it has been through all the centuries, the chief Gospel authority with theologians, it is coming to be set after the Synoptics.

Through this critical study of the Gospels, at the course of which we have glanced, a new conception of the character and work of Jesus is in process of formation. There is much reason to believe that this new conception, when

[1] *E.g.*, Wendt, *The Gospel according to St. John*, English translation, 1902; and E. A. Abbott, article "Gospels" in *Encyclopædia Biblica*.

[2] *E.g.*, Jülicher, *Introduction to the N. T.*, p. 422.

Professor Bacon thinks the direct internal evidence of the *Appendix* of the Gospel lacks both antiquity and authority, and that the general external evidence is as capable of an interpretation against as for the Johannean authorship. See *Hibbert Journal*, 1. 3; 2. 2.

complete, will differ from that of the orthodox theology as widely as the new view of the Bible differs from the old. Certain phases of this new conception have been so vividly realized that some writers speak as though the process of criticism in this direction were already finished, or at least were nearing completion. Thus Dr. Fairbairn not only says that we stand face to face with Christ "in a sense and to a degree unknown in the Church since the Apostolic Age" — a statement to which no serious exception can be taken, but he goes farther and treats the recovery of the historical Christ as an accomplished fact.[1] This is surely unwarranted. And one is hardly able to take at their full value, much as one would desire so to do, the words of Dr. Hall that "Historical Criticism has brought to pass what may almost be described as a second advent of the Incarnate Lord."[2]

The historical Jesus is indeed being recovered, and if we have regard only to the reading of his character and the appreciation of his teaching, one is justified in the use of very strong terms to describe what has been accomplished; but the subject is broader, and while such questions as the birth of Jesus and his resurrection are unsettled,[3] we cannot say that the process of historical recovery has reached its end. And these two questions, not to mention others, as the miracles of Jesus and his Messianic consciousness, are

[1] *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, pp. 294–295.

[2] *The Universal Elements of the Christian Religion*, 1905, pp. 207–255.

[3] Arnold, *God and the Bible*, 1893, says, indeed, that "the important thing is not whether Jesus rose, but whether his disciples *believed* that he rose." We do not think so. The important thing is to ascertain *in what sense* they believed that he rose.

obviously not yet settled. We can speak of a decided *trend* of criticism upon them, but not of final conclusions. What this trend is with regard to the birth and the resurrection of Jesus is suggested by the fact that few scholars of the present day, if any, would venture to say what was said only a few years ago, that these two alleged facts are the two *fundamental* miracles of Christianity.[1] The evidence for both alleged facts, in the sense in which they have been understood in the Church from time immemorial, is seen to be, when critically considered, quite insufficient. This insufficiency, however, is not the same in both cases. The evidence for a supernatural birth of Jesus is less strong than that which the New Testament affords for a bodily and material resurrection. Thus, for example, the words of Jesus and the circumstances of his life not only offer no confirmation of the story of his supernatural birth, but, on the contrary, are full of what seems to be a very definite implication that his humanity was perfectly normal, while as regards his resurrection the Gospels directly ascribe to him language which positively announces his resurrection, and then they give, though with much obscurity, a considerable number of circumstances confirmatory of the words of Jesus taken in a literal sense. It is impossible, therefore, from the standpoint of Historical Criticism to regard the supernatural birth of Jesus and his material resurrection as resting on equally conclusive grounds.

[1] Fairbairn, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, eleventh edition, 1899, says, p. 331, that "the essential miracles may be said to be three — the Birth, the Person, and the Resurrection. These all stand indissolubly together; partition is impossible."

Again, this sketch of modern interpretation as regards the record of Jesus' life may not omit this further fact, viz., that in this modern era, in spite of serious doubt regarding the alleged supernatural birth and material resurrection, there has been such an acquaintance with him, such an appreciation of his teaching, that Professor Peabody can declare that the exaltation of the character of Jesus is "the most conspicuous aspect of contemporary Christian thought."[1] What does this indicate if not that Christianity is capable of vigorous development, even though the supernatural birth and material resurrection of Jesus be relegated to the domain of "poetical mythology"? To say that they will yet be finally relegated to that sphere would be to make an unwarranted statement, but it is surely a most significant fact that Historical Criticism, which casts doubt on both these articles, is yet affirmed — and we believe truthfully affirmed — to have made Jesus better known than he had been since the days of the apostles.

There are other questions in connection with Jesus on which Historical Criticism is uttering views quite foreign to those held in earlier times and still held by the Church at large. Thus the nature and place of the miraculous in the ministry of Jesus is still a subject of earnest debate. Dr. Arnold was sure that miracles would be given up altogether as man's experience widens and as he sees *how*

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, 1. 4. — Ritschlianism has contributed to this end, whatever may be said in criticism of the exegesis of Ritschl himself, and in so far at least this theological school has been in accord with Historical Criticism.

they arose,[1] while Dr. Bruce regarded them as "of the very essence of revelation."[2] There is, however, an increasing agreement among scholars on two points, viz., first, that some of the alleged miracles in the Gospels, for example, the resurrection of many saints at the time of the resurrection of Jesus (Matt. 27 : 52), lack adequate support; and second, that many events which appeared to be miraculous in New Testament times would not be so regarded at present, being explicable on known laws of Nature.[3] It is also manifest — and this too is important for our final judgment of the matter — that the evangelists laid far greater stress on the value of the miraculous than is justified by the words of Jesus himself, or by the facts of his ministry.[4]

Once more, Historical Criticism is altering the conception of the divinity of Jesus. The earliest portrait of him recovered by analysis of the Gospels and in particular by the study of his inner life is incompatible with the philosophical conception which has prevailed in the Church since the second century. Historical Criticism teaches that we know much of the character of Jesus, more indeed than we know of the character of any other person of history,

[1] *Literature and Dogma*, p. 116.

[2] *The Chief End of Revelation*, p. 168.

[3] But if the "laws" of Nature are simply God's mode of action, then plainly a miracle is no more divine than any event that takes place according to known laws.

[4] Consider, for example, how frequently Matthew seeks to establish a connection between the works of Jesus and Old Testament prophecy, which Jesus never did in a formal manner, and perhaps but a single time even in a general way (Matt. 11 : 2–6).

but that we know as little of his nature or essence as we do of our own. Criticism has withdrawn all standing ground from beneath the metaphysical view. The divinity of Jesus remains, but it is the divinity of *character*. Hence, it is wholly like the divinity of the heavenly Father, as far as that may be judged from the revelation of Jesus, for his revelation is rigidly limited to God's *character*. He made no disclosures whatever in regard to the being of God.

Since the divinity of Jesus is such as man is capable of, it is consistent with intellectual, no less than with physical, limitations.[1]

Thus if the conclusions in regard to the Gospels which Historical Criticism has either reached or toward which it points be found valid, we are approaching a thorough reconstruction of the traditional doctrine of Christ, and so also of the doctrine of the Trinity.

We have now considered the great influences at work in the modern era of interpretation, and have endeavored to set forth the nature and importance of Historical Criticism by passing in review some of the more notable of its results, particularly those in the field of Bible history and exegesis. But the critical method has equally characterized other departments of the general subject of the interpretation of Scripture, as a hasty glance will show.

Thus the text of the New Testament, enriched by the discoveries of Tischendorf on Mt. Sinai,[2] has been brought

[1] That Jesus was conscious of such limitations is made quite plain by the Gospels. See the author's *The Revelation of Jesus*, pp. 169–174.

[2] Fragments of the Codex *Sinaiticus* were discovered in 1844, the main part in 1859.

to a high state of perfection by Hort († 1892) and other great continuators of the work of Griessbach and Bengel. The philological study of the Old Testament, especially the meaning of its separate words, has flourished under the stimulus afforded by the discovery of the nearly related language of Babylonia-Assyria, and its results are already being registered in lexicons [1] far richer and more exact than could possibly have been produced a hundred years ago.

Historical Criticism, utilizing the results of the excavations, has rewritten Biblical Archæology [2] from a broader point of view, while the Geography of the Holy Land has for the first time received scientific treatment within the last generation.[3] The discipline of Biblical Theology, which traces the development of belief from the earlier and lower to the later and higher forms, and which is the culmination of the entire process of interpretation, is the product of the last half century, an inspiration of the scientific age.[4]

From this branch, as it shall be perfected more and more with the perfecting of the entire preceding work of interpretation, there may come, one feels there ought to come, a new springtime of Theology proper, in which the old Greek

[1] That of Francis Brown, aided by Driver and Briggs, was published 1891–1906, and a new edition of Gesenius, edited by Buhl, 1905.

[2] The works of I. Benzinger and W. Nowack under the title *Hebräische Archäologie* were published in 1894.

[3] For details of this recent work, see G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, third edition, 1895, Preface.

[4] The literature of this discipline is already extensive, showing works that cover the entire O. T. or the entire N. T., and yet more that deal with some single writer or some brief period.

system, which has long outlived its usefulness, will vanish away, and the Spirit of God interpreting the history of Israel and the work of Jesus in the light of the present will make the deep elements of their permanent revelation the substance of a new and vital teaching for a new and expanding Church.

We observe in concluding this chapter that toward this springtime — already announced here and there [1] — many are looking to-day, and are waiting for it as watchmen wait for the morning. But we must not be deceived as to the nearness and ease of its coming by the unexampled progress of interpretation in the last three quarters of a century. What Historical Criticism aided by Natural Science and Comparative Religion has achieved contrasts strongly with the achievements of the earlier ages, yet this achievement is imperfect, and when we have regard to the great mass of the Christian Church, — Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Greek Catholic, — we must admit that it is a door through which but few have yet entered into the larger life of the revelation of God.

The achievement itself is still imperfect. The method indeed is scientific, but none who employ it are wholly free from prejudice and bias, neither are they trained to the needed largeness and clearness of view. The last generation has produced two classes of commentaries on the Bible, the technical and the popular, in each of which numerous volumes have been written that eclipse the best work of the fourth, the sixteenth, or the eighteenth cen-

[1] See, *e.g.*, W. N. Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, and W. A. Brown, *Christian Theology in Outline*, 1907.

tury;[1] but is there one of these books that satisfies its author, one that can be regarded as wholly adequate to the present state of knowledge, least of all one that by any stretch of imagination could possibly be looked on as final? There is only one answer to these questions from any person who understands the nature of Historical Criticism and who appreciates at all the influence of ancient dogmas intrenched behind the visible institutions of Christianity and hallowed by the usage of countless noble and true lives. Historical Criticism is an ideal which, though grasped and its real nature apprehended, is nowhere consistently applied. It is indeed, as has been said, the special gift of God to this age, but it is not *for* this alone: it is for all the future, to be cultivated so long as there shall be spiritual development upon the earth, and to be perfected from generation to generation.

And then, even this partial and imperfect dawn of a new era of interpretation is as yet seen and felt by only a few in the wide Church of God. Few even in the Protestant Church know what God has wrought and is now working for the understanding of his ancient Scriptures. There are great denominations in which the method and results of Historical Criticism are not openly tolerated; numerous influential schools of theology and other educational institutions in which the traditional view of the Bible is

[1] Such volumes may be found, *e.g.*, in the Meyer series on the N. T., in Holtzmann's *Handcommentar zum A. T.*, Marti's *Kurzer Handcommentar zum A. T.*, in *The Expositor's Bible*, and in *The International Critical Commentary*, not to mention works of equal value on single books of Scripture.

zealously, and on occasion almost fanatically, defended as though it were the very Ark of God; books of alleged interpretation of Scripture, ecclesiastically sanctioned, whose method is more mediæval than modern; and, finally, a great host of preachers who either do not know what Historical Criticism has done for the Bible or who are very successful in concealing the truth from those whom they are set to guide. And all this is within that branch of the Church in which biblical science has been most largely fostered. The more numerous ritualistic branches of the Church stand practically untouched by this momentous work of the Spirit of God.

It is not, therefore, for those who cherish the gift of a disenthralled Bible and who appreciate the method of its disenthrallment to think of the achievement of the modern age in the interpretation of Scripture as other than a new germ planted in the Church, which they, as children of the fuller light, are to water and nourish; to water and nourish, moreover, in the sure and steadfast conviction that this fuller light will sometime dawn throughout the entire Church.

As the revelation of God to Israel grew from less to more until it culminated in the perfect Sonship of Jesus, so the interpretation of that revelation, both the intellectual and the vital, is subject to the law of gradual development. In the history of this development the modern scientific era of Scripture study will always stand as a notable waymark. The light which rests upon it is the light of God, and we believe it to be the harbinger of a far more glorious day.

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By the same author

A Primer of
THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

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